

The Ten Commandments in Medieval and Early Modern Culture

Intersections

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN EARLY MODERN CULTURE

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VOLUME 52 – 2017

The titles published in this series are listed at brill.com/inte

The Ten Commandments in Medieval and Early Modern Culture

Edited by

Youri Desplenter
Jürgen Pieters
Walter Melion



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Cover illustration: *God gives Moses the Ten Commandments*, unknown workshop (Netherlands, 1380–1410). Detail of a pen-and-ink drawing, mounted on fol. 45r of Ms. Wiesbaden, Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, 3004 B 10 (c. 1410). Reproduced with permission.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Desplenter, Youri, editor.

Title: The Ten Commandments in medieval and early modern culture / edited by Youri Desplenter, Jürgen Pieters, Walter Melion.

Description: Leiden : Boston : Brill, 2017. | Series: Intersections : interdisciplinary studies in early modern culture, ISSN 1568-1181 ; volume 52 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017032444 (print) | LCCN 2017037503 (ebook) | ISBN 9789004325777 (E-book) | ISBN 9789004309821 (hardback : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Ten commandments—History—Congresses. | Commandments of the church—History—Congresses.

Classification: LCC BV4720 (ebook) | LCC BV4720 .T46 2017 (print) |

DDC 241.5/209—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017032444>

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: “Brill”. See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 1568-1181

ISBN 978-90-04-30982-1 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-32577-7 (e-book)

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Acknowledgements

Most of the contributions included in this volume were first presented at the conference *The Ten Commandments in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, held in Ghent (Belgium), on April 10–11, 2014. The conference was part of the research project *De Tien Geboden en het ideaal van introspectie en individuatie in de Late Middeleeuwen (ca. 1300–ca. 1550) / The Ten Commandments and the Ideal of Introspective Individuation in the Late Middle Ages (c. 1300–c. 1550)*. The project and the conference were generously funded by the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO). The editors would also like to thank Lisette Blokker, Sarah Lallemand, and Charlotte Cooper for their help during the editorial process.

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Introduction: Exploring the Decalogue in Late Medieval and Early Modern Culture

Youri Desplenter and Jürgen Pieters

During the major part of the Middle Ages and for most people living in that era, the Ten Commandments did not function as a guide for moral conduct.¹ With the Seven Cardinal Sins, Gregory the Great († 604) had created a successful alternative to the Old Testament Decalogue, which, after all, was initially intended for the Jewish people, and was part of the 613 *mitzvot* (commands) of the Torah.² Up to the twelfth century, this specifically Jewish heritage was an important reason why most Christian scholars cast doubt on the status of the Decalogue as a moral canon for Christians. Gregory's list had a huge impact on medieval vernacular culture.³ However, under the influence of Augustine († 430), twelfth-century Biblical exegetes such as Hugh of Saint Victor († 1141) began decisively to change attitudes toward the Ten Commandments in Latin culture, by emphasizing their importance as a list of principles supporting morally exemplar behavior.⁴ Moreover, the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) stated that everyone had to go to confession at least once a year. As Lesley Smith has made clear in her recent book on the late-medieval presence of the Decalogue, this decree created a new genre of confessional literature in which the Ten Commandments began to play an increasingly important role.⁵ Not entirely unlike the Seven Sins, the Ten Commandments were gradually considered a useful instrument for the examination of conscience. Franciscans and Dominicans, founded in the thirteenth century, held the Ten Commandments in high esteem, but it would take some time before the Decalogue would outrank the

1 See: Wachinger B., "Der Dekalog als Ordnungsschema für Exempelsammlungen. Der › Große Seelentrost ‹, das › Promptuarium exemplorum ‹ des Andreas Hondorff und die › Locorum communium collectanea ‹ des Johannes Manlius", in Haug W. – Wachinger B. (eds.), *Exempel und Exempelsammlungen* (Tübingen: 1991) 239–263, here 240–242; and Bast R.J., *Honor your Fathers. Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, c. 1400–1600*, *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought* 63 (Leiden: 1997) esp. 32–37.

2 Smith L., *The Ten Commandments: Interpreting the Bible in the Medieval World* (Leiden: 2014) 2–3.

3 Bloomfield M.W., *The Seven Deadly Sins. An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (Michigan: 1952).

4 Smith, *The Ten Commandments* 5–6.

5 Smith, *The Ten Commandments* 5–6.

Seven Sins as the primary moral code of conduct. This was certainly the case from the fifteenth century on, and the importance of the Ten Commandments became almost absolute in the sixteenth and later centuries, certainly amongst Protestants.⁶ The growing prominence of the Ten Commandments, as well as the gradual vanishing of the Seven Sins in late medieval and early modern culture, only became possible when appreciation for the Ten Commandments passed from Latin into vernacular culture. From the fourteenth century on, vernacular texts that discussed or commented upon the Decalogue came to the fore.⁷ By the second half of the fifteenth century, the Commandments were omnipresent in religious culture. Their diverse textual and visual manifestations were found in a variety of media, from manuscripts and printed books, to wall paintings and wooden panels. Indeed, scholars of medieval catechesis have tended to study medieval vernacular Decalogue texts together with other confessional writings. More recent research makes clear, however, that the relevance of medieval confessional literature goes far beyond pure catechesis: because of the close connection between the concept of sin and the perception of self, the study of confessional texts has resulted in new insights into developing possibilities of introspection.⁸ Not only did vernacular texts transmit theological (or, better, theological-philosophical) knowledge formerly anchored in *Latinitas* to a public that had not mastered Latin (viz., *vernacular theology*),⁹ they also taught their audiences how to deal with sin and the question of guilt.¹⁰ The scholarly consensus is that introspection, connected to the practice of self-inquiry, was essential for the development of early modern individuality, more precisely, to the process of individuation.¹¹ Better than other confessional writings, Decalogue texts, it is increasingly argued, can be taken as a symptom of the development of the self-conscious individual. The recent

6 Van Deursen A.Th., *Rust niet voordat gy ze van buiten kunt. De Tien Geboden in de 17e eeuw* (Kampen: 2004).

7 Suntrup R. – Wachinger B. – Zotz N., “« Zehn Gebote » (Deutsche Erklärungen)”, in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, vol. 10 (Berlin et al.: 1999) cols. 1484–1503.

8 Feistner E., “Zur Semantik des Individuums in der Beichtliteratur des Hoch- und Spätmittelalters”, *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 115 (1996) 1–17, here 1–2.

9 See: Watson N., “Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409”, *Speculum* 70 (1995) 822–864, here 823–824.

10 Störmer-Caysa U., *Gewissen und Buch. Über den Weg eines Begriffes in die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte 14 (Berlin et al.: 1998) 212.

11 Störmer-Caysa, *Gewissen und Buch* 1.

book by Lesley Smith, mentioned above, along with her contribution to this volume, corroborates this reading of the Decalogue:

What we have not seen in the interpretation of the commandments is any sort of call for radical societal change [...] Where these [*twelfth-century*] commentators [*discussed in Smith's book*] do call for change, however, is at the level of the individual. Instead of dealing with society as a whole, they address every single person, to set out the standards expected by God. In this the commentators are following the example of the Decalogue itself, which speaks to the (Hebrew and Latin) reader in the singular 'you'.¹²

Smith's words enable us to reframe the distinction with which we began—that between the Seven Sins and the Ten Commandments as moral systems. During most of the Middle Ages, the former system was considered an organism with its own dynamic, influencing man, but also taking control of him.¹³ In contrast, the human subject that underlies the system of the Ten Commandments is one that consciously opts for either good or bad behavior. Also, whereas the Seven Deadly Sins seem to rest upon a logic that is prohibitive—if you do this, you will be punished thus—the Ten Commandments prescribe in a largely positive way, urging the believer to do what has to be done. The form and formulation of the Decalogue not only allow more properly for (individual) obedience—or disobedience, for that matter—but certainly also for what is typically seen as the 'interiorization' of the Law. Obedience was of course desired by the Church, hence the rhymed and sung versions of the Ten Commandments,¹⁴ which made positive interiorization easier than the moral system of the Seven Sins, based as the latter are on an external code of behavior imposed as a rule of conduct.

The reflections we have just summarized, served as the basis for a research project supported by the Flemish Research Foundation (FWO). The project was meant to investigate the interrelationship between two salient phenomena of the late medieval and early modern periods, that became prominent in the Low Countries earlier than elsewhere in Western Europe, due to various religious, social and cultural circumstances:

¹² Smith, *The Ten Commandments* 214.

¹³ Feistner, *Zur Semantik des Individuums* 6.

¹⁴ See: Suntrup – Wachinger – Zotz, *Zehn Gebote*, cols. 1496–1502.

- 1) the rise to prominence of the Ten Commandments in vernacular literature and culture;
- 2) the development of cultural processes of introspection and individuation, said to have culminated in the idea(l) of the Renaissance individual;

By studying a corpus of Middle Dutch texts on the Ten Commandments (c. 1300–c. 1550) against the backdrop of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century equivalents, we tried to highlight what struck us as a telling conjunction. Especially within the reformed tradition (Luther – Calvin – Pietism), the Decalogue received a lot of attention. A first important index of this was Erasmus' work on the Ten Commandments,¹⁵ grounded as his theology was in the *Devotio Moderna*, the religious movement that originated at the end of the fourteenth century and proved determinative for the spiritual climate of the fifteenth-century Low Countries (and German-speaking regions).¹⁶ Our analysis of these texts, especially those connected to Pietism (in the Northern Netherlands known as the 'Nadere Reformatie'; cf. Willem Teellinck in the 1620s and 1630s)—a spiritual movement within Protestantism that paid close attention to the Decalogue and medieval mysticism, and aimed at the individual interiorization of Christianity—¹⁷ showed clearly that the Decalogue was crucial to the early modern perception of the individual. The ultimate aim of the FWO project was to identify and account for a number of continuities that marked the late medieval and early modern periods in the Low Countries, and which up till now—partly on account of institutional structures—have received little academic interest. Indeed, since literary-historical research has largely been carried out by medievalists or early-modern specialists, we have remained largely blind to processes that cross the artificial borders separating the Middle Ages (up to 1400? 1500? 1550?) from the beginnings of modernity.

In the course of our research project (2012–2016), we organised an international conference on the Ten Commandments in European vernacular writing. Previous analyses of medieval vernacular writings on the Ten

15 See his *Explanatio symboli apostolorum sive catechismus* (1533). A translated and annotated version can be found in Erasmus Desiderius, *Spiritualia and Pastoralia*, ed. J. O'Malley, Collected Works of Erasmus 70 (Toronto et al.: 1998) 231–387. The Ten Commandments are discussed on pages 364–385.

16 The range of studies on the *Devotio Moderna* is vast; most recently, see Van Engen J., *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life. The Devotio Moderna and the World of the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: 2008).

17 Brecht M., "Pietismus", in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 26 (Berlin et al.: 1996) 606–631, here 606.

Commandments have not led to an exhaustive study of Decalogue texts as a 'genre'. Furthermore, research on early-modern Decalogue writings has not contextualized them within more general religious and cultural attitudes to introspection and individuation. Research has instead focused on what seemed more pressing matters, such as the relation between the Ten Commandments and politics.¹⁸ The present volume is the outcome of our conference, which took place in Ghent on April 10–11, 2014. More than twenty participants presented papers on the Ten Commandments in medieval and early-modern culture. Approximately half of them were selected for the present *Intersections*-volume. Obviously, this collection of essays in no way intends to offer an exhaustive treatment of this huge thematic field. It does, however, hope to suggest new methodological and theoretical approaches toward the continued presence of the Ten Commandments in late medieval and early-modern culture.

As already noted, from the medieval period onward the Decalogue was portrayed in diverse media, ranging from handwritten treatises to wall paintings. The heterogeneity of this material provokes numerous research questions, many of which are vital yet largely unexplored. It also poses methodological challenges to scholars who seek to situate the Ten Commandments within the broader context of medieval and early modern culture. Bearing this in mind, we invited participants to elaborate on various aspects of textual—both Latin and vernacular—and visual manifestations of the Decalogue between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. We particularly urged them to take into account the broader cultural context in which the Decalogue functioned, as well as the methodological and theoretical issues raised by their objects of enquiry. Before summarizing the contributions to this volume, let us briefly list the topics that we considered (and still consider) worthy of further exploration on the occasion of the 2014 conference:

- 1) *The relationship (or absence of it) between scholastic and vernacular writings on the Ten Commandments*: Recent research has shown that some vernacular texts on the Ten Commandments contain elaborate theological content. Which themes found their way from academic into vernacular theology? Were there any independent developments within the vernacular writings on the Decalogue? In which milieus were the 'learned' vernacular treatises written?

18 See: Bast R.J., "The Political Dimension of Religious Catechisms in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Europe", *La Révolution française* 1 (2009) [digital journal; <http://lrf.revues.org/index123.html>].

- 2) *The Ten Commandments in various textual genres*: The typological diversity of writings on the Decalogue is astonishing. These tenets of the Law were discussed in scholastic *summae*, catechetical *mirrors* and sermons, put into simple rhymes, combined with images, and even interwoven into stage plays. How did different genres incorporate the Commandments? Was there any genre-specific emphasis on certain aspects of the exegetical tradition pertaining to the Decalogue? What was the audience for these different genres of writing on the Ten Commandments?
- 3) *The Ten Commandments in the visual arts*: Obedience to these precepts, as well as infractions against them, were depicted in diverse media. Did the iconography of the Ten Commandments change according to function and medium? Did the iconography of scenes from the Decalogue change during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation?
- 4) *The Decalogue in medieval and early modern popular culture*: The Ten Commandments, like other moral precepts, penetrated popular religious culture. How did rhymed versions of the Decalogue, some of which could be sung, and inexpensive prints combining text and image, circulate and function? Who used them?
- 5) *The Ten Commandments in early modern theology*: The Decalogue played a vital role in Protestant theology. Did the reformers postulate any major shifts in the interpretation of these precepts? If so, what sorts of response did they provoke from Catholic theologians?

Some of these topics were discussed at the conference, but certainly not all of them. As a result, and also since this *Intersections* volume contains only a selection of the papers, we were compelled to rethink how best to organize the material. Chronology and genre were the two most important criteria. We start with the contribution by Lesley Smith, followed by three essays dealing with subjects from literature and focusing on what may be construed as artistic and/or art-historical questions. Then the focus shifts to more didactic texts, such as treatises and sermons. The contribution by Robert Bast introduces this subsection, which like the previous one is organized chronologically.

In “The Ten Commandments in Medieval Schools: Conformity or Diversity?”, Lesley Smith situates growing interest in the Decalogue within the context of the twelfth-century Renaissance. The main impetus behind this development was Peter Lombard’s discussion of the Ten Commandments in the third book of his *Four Books of Sentences*. Peter’s discussion, Smith argues, ‘set the tone for how the Decalogue was treated by generations of commentators’, especially in his insistence on the fact that the Decalogue should not be seen as ‘a negative set of prohibitions or proscriptions’, but rather, as a ‘positive *prescription* for

living a good life with the development of virtue'. In the wake of the *Sentences*, Smith goes on to show, Peter's discussion of the Commandments became part of the school curriculum. Given the increasing interest of the twelfth century in the Bible and, more generally, in theological questions, discussion of the Decalogue moved beyond the monastic setting of the early Middle Ages, where the Commandments had come to function as a pastoral aid for spiritual growth and individual edification. The Decalogue featured increasingly as a topic of discussion in confessors' manuals, model texts on preaching, instructional compendia for parish priests, and so on. Referring to several commentators of the later twelfth and early thirteenth centuries (John of La Rochelle, Robert Grosseteste, Thomas of Chobham, et al.), Smith makes clear how the developing discussion of the Decalogue exemplifies 'the Christianization of a central and essential Jewish text'. As she puts it: 'It was important for medieval theologians not only to show that there were ten commandments, but that the ten given in the biblical text were the optimal ten; in technical terms, this meant showing that these ten were both necessary and sufficient for salvation. To do this, scholars had to demonstrate that these ten precepts were not random, but were the result of principles of Creation'. As Smith further demonstrates, Peter Lombard's Parisian example was decisive for the general approach to the Ten Commandments in the schools; in the course of the thirteenth century, however, and in response to the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), with its requirement for annual confession, discussion of the Decalogue became increasingly diverse. While the schools' working method may have imposed conformity on scholastic practitioners, there was ample occasion to add individually to the discussion of the Decalogue in extra-scholastic pastoral and theological contexts.

In "Ché, se potuto aveste veder tutto / Mestier non era parturir Maria': Dante on the Decalogue as a Means to Salvation", Luca Gili wonders why Dante († 1321), in his *Divine Comedy*, is so silent about the Ten Commandments. Given the theological impetus behind his poetic masterpiece, discernible in the journey of the text's hero toward salvation, readers would surely have expected Dante to say something about the Decalogue. As Gili argues, the absence of the Ten Commandments in the *Comedy* might be explained by the Thomist background of Dante's views on salvation. By confronting Dante's poetry with Thomas Aquinas' reflections on the Ten Commandments (both in the short treatise *De decem praeceptis* and in the *Summa Theologiae*), Gili is able to conclude that the two authors shared a theology in which grace is the necessary and sufficient condition of salvation. In Thomist theology, keeping the commandments is a necessary but *not* sufficient condition for securing this Christian goal.

In “Fit for a Prince: The Ten Alternative Commandments in Christine de Pizan’s *Epistre Othea*”, Charlotte Cooper focuses on stories XXXV–XLIV from the famous early fifteenth-century French literary masterpiece, which take as their theme the Ten Commandments. However, as she argues, Christine’s book, in the fascinating interplay amongst the ‘texts’, ‘glosses’, ‘allegories’ and miniature illustrations of which it is composed, presents the Decalogue, albeit implicitly, as something other than a set of straightforward precepts, particularly for readers of noble birth and for the letter’s original addressee, Louis d’Orléans († 1407), founder of the Order of the Porcupine. In the *Epistre Othea*, Cooper claims, Christine not only proposes ten alternative commandments that she considers more useful for her primary reader, but also renders ambiguous and in some cases problematic the precepts of the Decalogue. How does a Prince, for instance, in times of war deal with the injunction that one should not kill? Cooper also invokes Jean Miélot’s mid-fifteenth-century reworking of Christine’s ‘Letter’. Here, as she points out, the importance of the Ten Commandments is downplayed, in favour of mythological materials that are rendered far more prominent.

In “Loving Neighbor before God: The First Commandment in Early Modern Lyric Poetry”, Gregory P. Haake considers the love lyrics of three prominent early modern poets (Petrarch († 1374), Maurice Scève († c. 1564) and Pierre de Ronsard († 1585)) from the perspective of the First Commandment: ‘You shall have no other gods before me [...]. You shall not make yourself an idol’. Describing Laura as an ‘idol carved in living laurel’, does not Petrarch sin against this most basic of precepts? As Haake argues, the language of idolatry in which these authors’ love lyrics are steeped serve as a means to bring both the beloved lady and the divine closer. ‘[A]s a distant and yet visibly concrete beauty’, he concludes, ‘the lady as idol constitutes a substitute for the God whose distance was felt particularly during the early modern period’. Rather than serving as instances of actual idolatrous behavior (and as products of transgression against the First Commandment), Haake considers a series of poems by Petrarch, Scève and Ronsard that give voice to an ever more urgent need for experience the divine in one’s life, the outcome of the poets’ sense that God on earth has become increasingly elusive.

In his contribution, “The Ten Commandments and Pastoral care in Late-Medieval and Early Modern Europe: an Inquiry into Expectations and Outcomes”, Robert Bast looks at later developments in the contexts of theological instruction and lay pastoralism, spanning the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Bast focuses on Strasbourg, the home city of the former Dominican monk Martin Bucer († 1551), ‘a tireless promoter of the Ten Commandments’, as Bast acknowledges. The city had previously been closely associated with

Marquard von Lindau († 1392), whose book *Die zehe Gebote* greatly influenced teaching of the Decalogue prior to the onset of Reformation. Also, from 1478–1510, Strasbourg was the home of Johann Geiler von Kaisersberg († 1510), disciple and translator of Jean Gerson († 1429), whose *Opusculum tripartitum*, as Bast puts it, ‘functioned as Strasbourg’s first Decalogue-based catechism’. The bulk of his article discusses four representative texts by Jean Gerson, Ulrich von Pottenstein († c. 1417), Johannes Wolff († 1468) and Luther († 1546) himself, and endeavours better to understand the authors’ expectations with regard to the Ten Commandments, and their shared conviction that sound application of the Ten Commandments could indeed serve as a remedy against potential crises, both in the Church and in society at large. Bast concludes with a plea for methodological caution: it is obviously very difficult, he states, to gauge the effective impact of writings on the Decalogue on behavior, let alone determine how the prescriptions distilled in this or that commandment were followed in practice. However, Bast’s own example reveals that a careful and unprejudiced inquiry into the historical interrelationships between late medieval and early modern Reformed discussion of the Ten Commandments can yield new insights into what the author describes as ‘the very long shadow that the Reformation continues to cast over the topic before us’.

In her article, “The Ten Commandments in the Thirteenth-Century Pastoral Manual ‘Qui bene presunt’”, Greti Dinkova-Bruun focuses on a text that was written around 1220 by Richard of Wetheringsett, a student of William de Montibus († 1213) at the cathedral school in Lincoln, later hailed as the earliest identifiable chancellor of the University of Cambridge. Richard’s prosimetric treatise became one of the most popular preaching manuals in the British Isles during the later Middle Ages. Dinkova-Bruun concentrates on the eighth distinction of Richard’s *summa*, entitled “De decem preceptis”. She first focuses on a number of sources that Richard used in compiling this particular section of his preaching manual (among them a number of ‘mnemonic verses’ that he borrowed from William de Montibus’s poetic compilation, the *Versarius*), and then moves on to the text’s discussion of the Fourth Commandment, which urges Christian believers to take care of their parents. As Dinkova-Bruun makes clear, the author of “Qui bene presunt” integrates into his discussion of this commandment a critique of certain city officials who clearly did not behave as proper fathers should.

In “Morals from a Mystical Cook: Jan van Leeuwen and the Ten Commandments”, Youri Desplenter discusses two Middle Dutch treatises on the Ten Commandments, produced by Jan van Leeuwen († 1378) in the 1350s. Van Leeuwen was a lay brother and cook of the Groenendaal priory of canons, near Brussels, made famous by the mystic John of Ruusbroec († 1381). Van Leeuwen’s writings

have generally remained in the shadow of Ruusbroec's, but as Desplenter's analysis of the treatises on the Commandments shows, the cook's work fully merit close attention. The texts under scrutiny belong to the earliest writings on the Decalogue in Dutch. Desplenter not only tries to explain why Jan van Leeuwen felt the need to produce two separate treatises on the Decalogue, but also enquires into what might have inspired him to write on this theme.

Lucie Doležalová's article examines Latin mnemonic verses on the Decalogue, transmitted in late medieval Bohemia, which combine discussion of the Ten Commandments with the ten plagues of Egypt. The author traces the connection between the commandments and the plagues, to Augustine's "Sermo de decem plagis Egyptiorum et decem praeceptis legis" ("Sermon on the Ten plagues of Egypt and Ten Commandments of the Law"). In this sermon, Augustine argues that the precepts are generally transgressed by those who suffer from the same spiritual maladies against which God originally sent the plagues as punishment. Doležalová then expounds three mnemonic poems that specifically adduce this same connection, by Williram of Ebersberg († 1085), Peter Riga († 1209) and Christian of Lilienfeld (?) († 1360), respectively. In her analysis, she draws specific attention to the manuscript tradition of these texts and to the moral function of their mnemonic form.

The topic of Krzysztof Bracha's contribution ("The Ten Commandments in Preaching in Late Medieval Poland") is a sermon on the Ten Commandments ("Sermo de praeceptis") in MS. 3022, preserved at the National Library in Warsaw. The manuscript dates from the second half of the fifteenth century and includes a collection of sermons that judging from the number of extant copies was very popular in late medieval Poland. The specific sermon on which Bracha focuses contains a presentation of the Decalogue with a rhymed translation of each Commandment in Old Polish, as well as a comprehensive Biblical and moralistic commentary. In his analysis of the text, Bracha shows how the commentaries treat the Decalogue as the fountainhead of the ethical norms to be observed in everyday life.

In "The Law Illumined: Biblical Illustrations of the Commandments in Lutheran Catechisms", Henk van den Belt takes a closer look at the woodcuts accompanying the discussion of the Ten Commandments in Martin Luther's *Deutsch Catechismus*. Van den Belt assesses the woodcuts from a theological perspective, and on this basis (in particular, the selection of the scenes illustrated) explains why Luther chose to illuminate his catechetical exposition of the Law with woodcuts. He then turns to what he considers the theological inspiration behind Luther's assessment of the Decalogue: Melancthon's exegesis of the Ten Commandments in the so-called "Scholia" on *Exodus* 20

(1523), the “Short Explanation of the Ten Commandments” (1527?) and the *Catechetical Instruction* (1543). As he demonstrates, the illustrated scenes in Luther’s *Catechism* all come from the Old Testament, and—with one notable exception—provide examples of what the author labels ‘punished disobedience’. The woodcuts stage scenes of transgression and punishment, in line with Luther’s emphasis on the *usus elencticus* of the Divine Law, seen as a preparation for the Gospel: ‘The Law confronts us with sin and its consequences in order to lead us to Christ’. In the remainder of his article, Van den Belt discusses the use of these illustrations in later Lutheran catechisms, but also in Roman Catholic ones, such as the Latin Catechism of Michael Helling († 1561) and its German translation. Interestingly, as he notes, the illustrations remain largely absent from the Reformed tradition, possibly as a result of its general reservations against images and, more specifically, against the visual representation of God.

Finally, in “Man and God: The First Three Commandments in the Polish Catholic Catechisms of the 1560s-1570s”, Waldemar Kowalski looks at four popular catechisms used in the Cracow diocese: *The Teachings of a True Christian* (1566) by Benedykt Herbest, *The Catechism of a True Vision of the Christian Faith* (1567) by Marcin Białobrzewski, the first Polish translation of the *Roman Catechism* (1568) by Walenty Kuczborski, and Hieronymus Powodowski’s *Catechism of the Universal Church, Teachings Most Necessary for Salvation, from the Evidence of Holy Scripture, Consisting of a Facile and Exact Compendium* (1577). In accordance with the catechesis of the Catholic Church, the first three commandments were seen to define man’s duties toward God, in thought, word and deed respectively. In its analysis of the importance of these commandments in the writings under scrutiny, Kowalski’s article provides a further illustration of what several contributions to this volume make clear: the moral system of the Decalogue is marked by a degree of adaptability that warrants its usage in many different local contexts. As the editors of the present collection see it, this salient characteristic can be related to the Decalogue’s emphasis on active interiorization by believers, whatever their denomination, social, linguistic or cultural background.

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The Ten Commandments in the Medieval Schools: Conformity or Diversity?

Lesley Smith

1 The Context of the Medieval Schools

This essay aims to sketch, in a short space, the academic context of the Decalogue in the schools of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and to show how and where the commandments began to develop their importance for the Middle Ages. To do this, I shall attempt to lay out the framework in which the commandments were discussed in the schools; to consider how this framework constrained schoolmen in their treatment of the commandments; and to ask whether, and how, interpreters could move beyond the limitations of the schools' curriculum. We might think that the commandments would always have had a prominent place in the history of biblical interpretation, but that seems not to have been the case. Augustine devoted a pair of sermons to the commandments, and he talks about various aspects of the precepts in other writings, but his treatment is not very systematic;¹ yet until the twelfth-century Paris schools there is very little further discussion of any interest. Should we be surprised at this? The commandments were the most important of the 613 *miztvuot*, the commands of the Jewish Law (the Old Law, as Christians termed it), and the place of the Law was a central issue for the Early Church. But I suspect that to be surprised at the lack of discussion is to fall into the trap of mistaking the later-medieval and Reformation interest in the commandments as representative of a continuous Christian role for the Decalogue. This is not borne out by evidence of Christian exegetical interest in the commandments until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when an upsurge of activity is related

1 Augustine, "Sermon 8 on the Ten Plagues of Egypt" ("De decem plagis aegyptorum et decem praeceptis legis"), and "Sermon 9 on the Ten-Stringed Instrument of the Psalter" ("De decem chordis"), in *Sancti Aurelii Augustini. Sermones de vetere testamento*, ed. C. Lambot, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 41 (Turnhout: 1961); and *Quaestiones in Exodum*, in *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum libri VII*, ed. J. Fraipoint, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 33 (Turnhout: 1958). And see in general: Smith L., *The Ten Commandments: Interpreting the Bible in the Medieval World* (Leiden: 2014).

to the so-called twelfth-century renaissance, and to the desire of lay Christians to learn more about their religion. In response, churchmen and theologians began to look for ways of involving the laity in the practice of their faith, ideas that were cemented in the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215.²

There are also what we might call technical reasons for the relative lack of interest in the commandments in the earlier Middle Ages. In the monasteries and in the early cathedral schools the study of the Bible began with the *Psalms* and the *Epistles* of Paul. Paul's preceptual theology was difficult, and he seemed, if anything, to minimise the place of the Old Law in Christian belief. His saying that 'the letter kills but the spirit gives life' (2 *Cor.* 3:6) seemed to imply that the words of Jesus in the Gospels had made anything the Old Testament had to offer redundant: Christianity was the age of the life-giving spirit, and it had done away with the deadening letter of the Law. The *Psalms*, on the other hand, were the ubiquitous Old Testament text, especially for monastic life; and here the difficulty was to explain how they might be important in a Christian context. The solution to this problem was to interpret them not literally, but according to the various *spiritual* senses of Scripture—so that typology or allegory could be used to show that the Hebrew Bible pre-figured or supported the Christian message, even before the coming of Christ. Before the twelfth century, the prevalent fashion in biblical interpretation was to emphasise such spiritual interpretations; and for this sort of reading, the commandments make a very poor text. For whereas some apparently literal Old Testament narrative—the *Song of Songs* is the prime example—was susceptible to a spiritual interpretation, it was really not clear that the commandments could be better understood using these spiritual tools. On the whole, they were simply too practical: firmly rooted as they are in the literal world, the commandments were just not attractive to sophisticated exegetes, and they were neglected in comparison to other biblical passages.

But in the twelfth-century schools, the literal and historical meanings of the Bible came into greater prominence—a development at least partly fuelled by the interests of Master Hugh and the school he directed at the abbey of St. Victor in Paris. Hugh taught that it was important not to rush straight to the spiritual senses of the text before you had first thoroughly understood the literal meaning, because the literal sense provided the foundation on which

2 For an overview and bibliography, see: Swanson R.N., *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Manchester – New York: 1999); and Benson R.L. – Constable G. (eds.), *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Oxford: 1982). See also: Goering J.W., *William de Montibus (c. 1140–1213): The Schools and the Literature of Pastoral Care*, Studies and Texts 108 (Toronto: 1992).

the rest of the edifice of meaning could be built.³ Hugh and his school were enormously influential in the first half of the twelfth century, and his interest in literal meanings began to alter the way scholars approached the Bible.

Hugh considered the commandments in his book on the Sacraments, and he also wrote a short treatise on the *Institution of the Decalogue* as the Law.⁴ Here the commandments were analysed not as part of a biblical commentary on *Exodus* or *Deuteronomy*, but in newer forms of theological, rather than exegetical, writing. This is true also of the commandments' most important appearance in twelfth-century theology, their place in the *Four Books of Sentences* by Peter Lombard.⁵ Peter was the head of the cathedral school at Notre Dame in Paris, writing in the very middle of the twelfth century, just a little after Hugh. He was a noted biblical commentator, especially on the *Psalms* and *Epistles*, but was perhaps even more famous for his collection of *sententiae*—short 'sentences' or opinions—which were connected series of questions on key theological issues, around which Peter arranged arguments drawn mostly from patristic authors, for and against his propositions. The use of sentences to debate theological problems had come to prominence early in the century at the cathedral school of Laon, run by the innovative master Anselm; but it was Peter Lombard's version, organised into four related volumes, that had the lasting influence.⁶ The *Four Books of Sentences* proved so useful for the teaching of theology that by the 1220s Lombard's work had become the inescapable textbook exercise for students at Paris. No-one studying for a doctorate in theology could graduate without producing their own *Sentences* commentary.

So it was crucial to the history of scholarship on the commandments that Peter included them in his book; and equally important was the way he approached them—because Peter's structure, emphases and examples set the tone for how the Decalogue was treated by generations of commentators. One keynote is that he considers the Decalogue as a whole entity, not simply as the individual commandments which comprise it, or as the subjects covered by the individual precepts. Although this may sound trivial, it is a crucial point, because it reminds us that the Decalogue is more than the sum of its parts.

3 Hugh of St. Victor, *The Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor*, ed. – transl. J. Taylor (New York – Oxford: 1961; repr. 1991) vi.

4 Hugh of St. Victor, *Hugonis de Sancto Victore. De Sacramentis christianae fidei*, ed. R. Berndt, Corpus Victorinum. Textus historici 1 (Aschendorff: 2008); and idem, *Institutiones de decalogo legis dominicae*, Patrologia Latina 176, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1854) 9–18.

5 Peter Lombard, *Magistri Petri Lombardi [...] Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae*, ed. I.C. Brady, 3 vols. (Grottaferrata: 1971) III, dist. 37–40.

6 Giraud C., *Per verba magistri: Anselme de Laon et son école au XII^e siècle* (Turnhout: 2010).

The commandments have to be seen together as a piece, not separately. The fourteenth-century scholar Nicholas of Lyra says that just as there is no hierarchy in the Trinity, so there is no hierarchy in the commandments; they stand and fall as a whole, like a brick wall: remove one brick and the whole thing collapses.⁷ Medieval theologians dealt with questions raised by the commandments—for example, idolatry, stealing or killing—in settings other than the Decalogue; and when they discuss these subjects elsewhere, they do not necessarily do so in the same way they do when commenting on the commandments, because their aims (and, sometimes, audience) are different. But in the *Sentences*, the commandments are presented together as part of the Law, and this context raises questions that go beyond the material of the individual precepts. So in the *Sentences* there is both a broader discussion of the commandments and also a narrower one: by and large, this was not the place to cover everything that might be said about every particular issue the Decalogue introduces. Instead, the *Sentences* provided an overarching view of the Decalogue as a collective entity, leaving much that was unconsidered.

Peter Lombard puts the Decalogue in the third of his four books of sentences, the theme of which is the Incarnation of Christ and the virtues it was thought to inculcate. In situating the commandments with these virtues, Peter shows us that he wants to present them in their role as a medicine for sin. Seen in this way, the Decalogue is not just the negative set of prohibitions or proscriptions existing in the common imagination—the ‘thou shalt nots’. On the contrary, it is a much more positive *prescription* for living a good life with the development of virtue. The point is not that if you break one of these rules you will be punished, but that if you keep these rules then you will be ready and able to live life with God. This is one of the reasons that discussions of the commandments often include a comparison with the Ten Plagues of Egypt: the plagues were spiritually interpreted as containing the whole of the seven deadly sins, so the commandments could be contrasted with them as remedies for those sins—as the means to virtuous living.

By including the Decalogue in his *Sentences*, Peter Lombard gave it a place in the curriculum of the schools, automatically increasing the amount of attention paid to the commandments in the classroom. This came alongside a general expansion of interest in the Bible and theology in the twelfth century, moving outside the mainly monastic setting of the early Middle Ages. The study of the Bible was no longer the majority preserve of monks reading

7 Nicolaus de Lyra. *Postilla super totam bibliam* (Strasbourg, [Johann Grüninger]: 1492; facsimile repr., Frankfurt am Main: 1971); on Ex. 20: *Sex enim diebus*.

the text as a kind of professional training, as an aid to contemplation, and for personal spiritual growth. From the twelfth century onward, we find ourselves dealing with a wider group of students and teachers, working not only for their own edification, but for a broader audience with much more extensive pastoral aims. By the thirteenth century, the commandments had a settled place amongst these discussions, so let us look now at how they were treated.

2 **How did Thirteenth-Century Schoolmen Deal with the Commandments?**

Like Peter Lombard, the schoolmen considered the commandments as a whole entity rather than as a collection of single precepts. This is particularly interesting for scholars today, as it allows us to study how a cluster of biblical material was expounded. Such groupings are surprisingly uncommon in medieval scriptural exposition, which tends to be fragmented, with commentators focusing on individual words or phrases. Here, instead, we have a central, orthodox text, looked at in its entirety.

By proceeding in this way, the commentators had to address the fundamental question of whether the Decalogue had any authority for Christians: that is to say, did the Old Law of the Jews have any standing in the New Covenant of the Gospel which had its own law of grace? Jesus himself seemed to offer two conflicting answers. Sayings such as ‘the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath’ (*Mk.* 2:27), and the repeated refrain of the Sermon on the Mount: ‘You have heard it said in old times [...] but I say to you [...]’, appeared to declare that the Law had been superseded by the coming of Christ. It was no longer enough not to kill: in the new dispensation even anger was forbidden. Jesus seemed to have initiated a new regime in which the Decalogue was devalued. On the other hand, Jesus also stated in the Sermon on the Mount (*Mt.* 5:17) that he had not ‘come to abolish the law and the prophets’: ‘I have come not to destroy the law’, he says, ‘but to fulfil it’.

Nonetheless, the whole idea of Law as a good thing seemed to be questioned by Paul. ‘If it had not been for the Law, I would not have known sin’, he says in the *Letter to the Romans* (7:7); and in *Corinthians* (2 *Cor.* 3:6) Paul contrasts the life the Jews live, which he characterises by an adherence to the letter of the Law, with the life Christians should live, one with flexible rules informed by the Holy Spirit. ‘The letter kills’, he says, ‘but the spirit gives life’. If this is true, then clearly the commandments could have no force for Christians, a conclusion which remained a matter of controversy amongst the early Christian communities.

All these questions had been addressed by Augustine, whose solutions are adopted by Peter Lombard. Augustine gives preference to Jesus' words that he has come to fulfil and not to destroy the Law, and he invokes Jesus' reply to the young man who asks him how he could be perfect: 'keep the commandments' is the short answer (*Mt.* 19:16–17). In addition, Augustine interprets the killing letter as any too-literal interpretation of any part of Scripture—so that the Gospel can be as deadening as the Hebrew Bible, if it is read the wrong way.⁸ And he distinguishes between different parts of the full 613 precepts of the Law: some parts endure, while others fall away at the coming of Christ. It was clear to everyone that Christians did not in fact keep the whole Law, even as they declared that they accepted its force in the New Covenant; indeed, they did not even keep the Ten Commandments as they were written. The Franciscan scholar Bonaventure explicitly mentions the criticism—the word he uses is 'ridicule'—of Christians by Jews and others for their hypocrisy on just this point.⁹ The solution was to divide the 613 *mitzvuot* of the Law into judicial, ceremonial and moral commands, and to declare that, for Christians, only the moral commands had authority. By definition, these *moralia* were those laws which it was never wrong to obey, at any time or in any circumstance. Christians got round the problem of why they had swapped keeping the Sabbath for keeping Sunday, by declaring it to be a mixed commandment: the observance of quiet was part of the moral law and so was always in force, applying to Christians as well as to Jews; but the particular day of the week was only ceremonial law, which it was possible to change. Christians were thus entitled to shift their observance from the rest day at the end of Creation (the Jewish Sabbath) to the day of Resurrection (the Christian Sunday).

When medieval commentators follow Augustine in rejecting the argument that the Decalogue has no force for Christians, they are not saying anything new. Nevertheless, in not rejecting the commandments, these scholars are re-asserting some important points. To begin with, the Christian acceptance of the Decalogue was in effect an acceptance of the place of the Hebrew Bible in Christian doctrine. This was a polemical, anti-heretical statement, and a positive declaration that orthodox belief acknowledged both the Old and New Testaments. It was predominantly Dualist sects, such as the Manicheans Augustine had attacked, who refused to recognise the Old Testament, and so it is not surprising that some Cathar groups held the same opinion. Commentators

8 Augustine, *De spiritu et littera*, ed. C.F. Urba – J. Zycha, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 60 (Vienna – Leipzig: 1913) 8–9.

9 Bonaventure, *Collationes de decem praeceptis*, in *Opera omnia* 5 (Quaracchi: 1891) *collationes* 3 and 4.

on the commandments rarely make explicit anti-heretical observations, but there are places where such remarks are implicitly inserted, and this is one of them.

Concomitant with the acceptance of the Hebrew Bible was the understanding that the Jews themselves had a place in the divine plan; as a result, they must also have a place in the contemporary world. Alone among non-Christian believers, Jews had to be treated differently, and allowed to survive. We can see this reflected in the thirteenth-century Franciscan scholar John of La Rochelle's discussion of the commandment against stealing. John asks a specific question about warfare, and whether it is lawful to remove the goods of conquered enemies.¹⁰ As long as the war is just and you have the authority of the state behind you, you may take the goods of those you have defeated, providing you do so in a spirit of justice and not out of vengeance. Infidels or heretics can simply be despoiled of all their belongings and killed; Jews, however, must be treated more leniently. Because the Bible (*Rom.* 10–11) does not permit the outright killing of Jews, they must be left at least with goods sufficient for the preservation of life.

Accepting the Decalogue as a single entity was also part of the Christianization of a central and essential Jewish text. Again, this was undoubtedly a polemical action, on more than one level. We can see the positive Christianizing of the Decalogue in the question of how the commandments were arranged on the two stone tablets. The first question Peter Lombard asks about the precepts—how can the commandments be contained within the two overarching Gospel precepts to love God and love your neighbour?—he answers in practical terms, by explaining how the commandments are to be divided between the two tablets.¹¹ This was another longstanding question, answered differently by Augustine and by Origen. It was also debated amongst Jews, but only one Jewish opinion was represented to Christians by the first-century writer, Philo Judaeus.¹²

Philo says that Jews reckoned five commandments equally on each stone; Origen divides them four on the first and six on the second; but Augustine prefers a three/seven division—three commandments referring to God, and

10 John of La Rochelle, *Tractatus de Legibus*, in *Doctoris Irrefragibilis Alexandri de Hales Summa Theologica seu sic ab origine dicta 'Summa Fratris Alexandri'. Liber III*, ed. V. Doucet (Quaracchi: 1948) no. 377.

11 Lombard, *Sententiae* III, dist. 37, c. 1.

12 Augustine, *Quaestiones in Exodum*, LXXI; Origen, *Origène. Homélie sur l'Exode*, ed. M. Borret, Sources chrétiennes 321 (Paris: 1985) cc. 1–2; Philo Judaeus, *On the Decalogue*, ed. F.H. Colson, The Works of Philo Judaeus 7 (London – Cambridge MA: 1937) c. 12.

seven to your neighbour. In terms of the logic of the biblical text, Augustine's is the least satisfactory solution: it just does not relate very well to the way the Bible lays out the precepts and it leaves a question hanging over the prohibition of covetousness. Nonetheless, by assigning three precepts to the first stone tablet (the tablet about God), Augustine puts the Christian Trinity at the heart of the Decalogue text and, by extension, at the heart of the Jewish Law. Such a solution was irresistible to Christian theologians. When Peter Lombard chose Augustine's division for the *Sentences*, that Trinitarian interpretation was fused into commentary on the text. Not only did Christians accept the Ten Commandments, Augustine's division showed that the commandments had somehow always been, in essence, Christian and Trinitarian. For medieval theologians, these apparently trivial points of order and arrangement could be shown to have a much deeper significance.

We can see this again in another of the very basic questions that medieval scholars felt bound to address: why were there ten—and only ten—commandments? It is not obvious from the biblical text that there are *ten* commandments. The closest the Bible comes to a number are the 'Ten Words' spoken of in *Exodus* 34 (14–26). The precepts themselves are not enumerated anywhere, and some commentators play with the scriptural phrasing to give totals running from nine to thirteen. The answer was important. In both Greek and Hebrew thinking, individual numbers had powers and characteristics beyond their arithmetical uses. Ten was a so-called perfect number, thought to denote both unity and comprehensiveness. Ten is the sum of the first four whole numbers, 1, 2, 3, 4, and the sum of 3 and 7, two other numbers considered to have special significance. Each of the integers from 1 to 9 can be combined in some way to make 10 ($9 + 1$; 2×5 ; $3 \times 2 + 4$); and so contained within the number ten are all the single integers.¹³ The importance of the number ten can be illustrated by the variety of groups of ten in the Bible—not just the commandments and the plagues of Egypt, but the ten generations of humanity to Noah and the Flood; the ten candelabra, ten tables, ten lavers, and cherubim ten cubits high in Solomon's Temple; Job's possessions numbered in tens (seven sons and three daughters; 7,000 sheep and 3,000 cattle, and so on); and, best of all, the ten times that God calls Creation into existence in the first chapter of *Genesis*.

It was important for medieval theologians not only to show that there were ten commandments, but that the ten given in the biblical text were the op-

13 For ancient and medieval number theory, see: Hiscock N., *The Symbol at Your Door: Number and Geometry in Religious Architecture of the Greek and Latin Middle Ages* (Aldershot: 2007); Hopper V.F., *Medieval Number Symbolism: Its Sources, Meaning, and Influence on Thought and Expression* (New York: 1938); and Smith, *The Ten Commandments*, ch. 2.

timal ten; in technical terms, this meant showing that these ten were both necessary and sufficient for salvation. To do this, scholars had to demonstrate that these ten precepts were not random, but were the result of principles of Creation. Commentators used a variety of schemes to show how the commandments might be derived, but a good example is given by the thirteenth-century Oxford scholar, Simon of Hinton. Simon says that the commandments are there to show humans how to avoid evil, whether toward God or your fellow human beings. His schema runs as follows:¹⁴

Avoiding Evil toward God:

Evil can come from three roots, in order of sinfulness:

from thoughts — which is avoided by — having no other gods
 from words — which is avoided by — not taking the Lord's name in vain
 from deeds — which is avoided by — keeping the Sabbath
 — giving the three commandments of the first stone tablet.

Avoiding Evil toward your Neighbour:

With regard to your neighbour, the order of the roots of evil is reversed; whereas with God wrong thought and belief is the worst you can do, for your neighbour, the worst evil comes from actions and deeds:

from deeds — to his person — which is avoided by — not killing
 ↙ to his wife — which is avoided by — not committing adultery
 ↘ to his goods — which is avoided by — not stealing
 from words — which is avoided by — not bearing false witness
 from thoughts — of his wife — which is avoided by — not coveting his wife
 ↘ of his goods — which is avoided by — not coveting his goods
 — giving six commandments of the second tablet.

But the Decalogue is not only about avoiding evil; you must also do good. And for this we add Honouring your Father and your Mother. Honour here can be interpreted to mean anything from providing physical sustenance to spiritual reverence; father and mother encompasses any person who has ever played a positive role in your life. This takes us to ten commandments in all; and because these ten have been derived from principles of good and evil, not just drawn from thin air, they can be seen to cover all situations. They embody the comprehensive nature of the number ten as well as its unity, and so are both necessary and sufficient for salvation.

14 Taken from his *Summa ad instructionem iuniorum*: see note 23, below.

Schemes like this one were not developed simply for the sake of playing with numbers. Medieval theologians saw the whole concept of number as embedded in the fabric of Creation; it was a way of perceiving God without words. Words could be slippery and their meaning uncertain, but numbers were always the same. Commenting on *Wisdom* 11:21, ‘You have ordered all things in measure, number, and weight’, Robert Grosseteste says:

Whenever you see something with measure and number and order, look for the craftsman. You will not find one except where the supreme measure, the supreme number, and the supreme order are: that is, with God, of whom it was most truly said that he disposed all things with measure, number and weight.¹⁵

So the fact that there are ten plagues of Egypt and ten commandments was not a random coincidence. The sharing of the numbers tells medieval scholars that these passages must have some deeper links, and commentaries on the commandments persist in trying to find them, even though it can seem to us to be a pointless exercise. In this case, as the plagues get nastier, the commandments become less important, and scholars find themselves having to connect the death of the firstborn children to coveting your neighbour’s goods.

The attempt to link the plagues and the commandments was a regular part of Decalogue interpretation, though scholars can often appear to be merely going through the motions, to no real end. The inclusion of this comparison, along with other recurrent issues which had long been solved by theologians, leads us to a fundamental question:

3 **How Far Could Christian Scholars Interpret the Commandments for Themselves, as Individuals, and How Far Were They Constrained by the System within which They Worked?**

Peter Lombard deals with the Decalogue over four sections of text, which he subdivides into twenty-seven chapters. Within these twenty-seven chapters, four raise general questions examining the Decalogue as a whole (such as whether the Law covers intention or only action), and five chapters cover nine of the individual commandments. This leaves the remaining eighteen chapters—two-thirds of the total—for Peter’s discussion of the single commandment against

¹⁵ Grosseteste R., *Hexaëmeron*, transl. C.F.J. Martin, *On the Six Days of Creation* (Oxford: 1999) 7.xiv.18.

false witness. Why is his treatment so out of balance? Augustine, preaching about the commandments, notes that he sees few murderers in his congregation, but he assumes that everyone is a liar—even if they lie from the best of motives.¹⁶ Augustine wrote two treatises on lying, swearing oaths and perjury, *De Mendacio* and *Contra mendacium*, and Peter takes over Augustine's definitions wholesale and employs his biblical examples.¹⁷ Augustine's preoccupations become Peter's—and because Peter's *Sentences* became the schools' textbook, this skewed approach continues throughout academic expositions of the commandments. The method of the schools was predominantly additive, meaning that once a question or topic had become part of the standard way of approaching a particular issue, it was very difficult to dislodge it: the same problems are treated over and over again, employing the same authoritative sources and the same examples. Conversely, it was difficult to introduce entirely new areas or angles of discussion into established issues. Once the lines of travel had been laid down, individual scholars made their mark not by radical innovation but by subtle changes to established routines.

This is true even when the outlines must have been well known. Concerning lying, for instance, there was a standard set of biblical examples that had to be considered by every scholar. Chief among these were the lies told to the Egyptians by the midwives who did not want to expose the Hebrew children (*Ex.* 1:15–21); the lie told by Rahab, who hid Joshua's spies in Jericho and helped them escape (*Josh.* 2); and the biggest problem of all, the words said by Jacob speaking to his father Isaac, when he pretended to be his twin brother Esau (*Gen.* 27). Anyone reading of how Jacob dressed up in skins to mimic his brother's hairy hands, so he could tell Isaac he was his own brother, Esau, would be in no doubt that Jacob lied: surely he conformed to Augustine's definition of a lie as 'false words, spoken with the intention of deceiving'.¹⁸ But for medieval theologians it was impossible that Jacob—the father of the tribe of Israel, the chosen people of God—could have transgressed the commandment so blatantly; there had to be an explanation. So each theologian had to rehearse the problem, making it clear that Jacob acted in the way he did because he alone knew what God intended. It was the divine will that Jacob receive his father's blessing and take the whole inheritance, and so by doing what he did, Jacob

16 See *Sermon 9*, and his opening remarks in *De Mendacio*, ed. J. Zycha, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 41 (Prague – Vienna – Leipzig: 1900) 411–466.

17 Augustine, *Contra mendacium*, ed. J. Zycha, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 41 (Prague – Vienna – Leipzig: 1900) 467–528.

18 *Contra mendacium* c. 12, n. 26; and see Lombard, *Sententiae* III, dist. 38, c. 3.

was only making sure that God's will was done. This was not a lie; it was the expression of a deeper truth.

So if their working method required such conformity, was it ever possible for schoolmen to deal with subjects and questions in new ways? Innovation is more likely in some situations than others. First of all, it is dependent on the institutional context. Within the context of the Paris schools, the models for dealing with material were relatively rigid. This is not surprising in an educational system which had developed its own syllabus and examination structure, and which was offering qualifications which were to be recognised across Europe. To preserve their reputation, the schools needed to be able to guarantee a certain quality and standard. Academics working in other centres, or without the rigorous Paris training—Robert Grosseteste in Oxford, for example—seem not to have been constrained in quite the same way.

The additive nature of the scholastic method meant that few questions were ever dropped—but things could be added. We can see this physically in the expanding size of the works produced: the *summas* of the thirteenth century (the successors to the *sentences* collections of the twelfth) represent both summary and summation, with the inclusiveness that implies. But this expansiveness could allow scholars to focus on their own interests, if they wished. John of La Rochelle, for instance, introduces the Decalogue within a wider context of the typology of law—the eternal Law of God and all the other sorts of law derived from it.¹⁹ The Law is founded on reason, and you are obliged to keep it because of the debt owed by you to God for your creation. John avoids the language of sin in favour of the language of offence and penalty, and his whole approach has a legalistic feel; his conclusions are completely orthodox, but the way he gets to them reflects his individuality. John can do this in a *summa* in addition to what else is expected of this kind of work, and he can use it to reflect his interests. We as readers can only detect John's particular contributions to these questions if we can recognise how and when he is stepping outside the norm.

More striking innovation is found in the creation and development of new genres of material in which the commandments may also appear. We have been considering the Decalogue in materials produced for the classroom, but it is precisely in this period of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries that new types of work, often developed in response to the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, appear in acknowledgement of the needs of the laity and those ministering to them. New or renewed pastoral genres such as confessors' manuals, model preaching texts, instructions for parish priests, and so on, allowed theologians to look at old questions in new ways, to ask new questions

19 John of La Rochelle, *Tractatus de Legibus* nos. 224–264.

and suggest new answers. Thomas of Chobham's early *Summa confessorum* is an interesting example of a work poised halfway between classroom and confessional box—partly a *summa* of theology and partly a pastoral manual.²⁰ When Thomas considers killing within his discussion of the Decalogue, his treatment is very short, barely noting more than that the will to kill as well as the act is forbidden. But when he returns to the subject within the broader topic of how to deal with anger (since anger provides the motivation for killing), he raises thirty-six separate questions, including killing in warfare, judicial killing, defence of others, and the killing of heretics and Jews. In addition, unlike the schoolroom commentaries on the commandments, Thomas concerns himself with the question of penalties, which gives us some idea of how the relative sinfulness of each act could be judged. This new context allows Thomas scope for innovation. Moreover, Thomas of Chobham is presenting his academic analysis for the guidance of front-line pastors, but the traffic was certainly not all one way. This takes us to our final observation.

4 The World Enters the Classroom as much as the Classroom Goes Out to the World

Much though the schoolmen might give the impression that their conclusions were based on Bible-reading and principled debate about authorities, in Decalogue commentary at least, the influence of the realities of the outside world was never far away. Among many possibilities, here are three brief examples:

- (i) Both the commandment against taking the Lord's name in vain and that on bearing false witness were interpreted to include the question of swearing oaths. The New Testament was unequivocal on the subject: 'Do not swear at all. Let your yes be yes, and your no, no' (*Mt.* 5:33–37). Oaths were unnecessary, they belittled God, and they opened the door to all sorts of sinful and habitual acts. But in a largely oral culture, oaths were also indispensable for the smooth running of society and the legal system; and so against the force of biblical argument, oaths had to be accommodated. Reluctantly, the schoolmen allow oath-taking, albeit with strict regulation.

20 Thomas of Chobham, *Thomae de Chobham Summa confessorum*, ed. F. Broomfield, *Analecta Mediaevalia Namurcensia* 25 (Louvain – Paris: 1968).

- (ii) The same was true for usury. Usury was included under the commandment against theft, and was, technically, completely forbidden. It dealt in time, which belonged to God alone, it involved swearing oaths, and it violated the demands of charity. But lending money at interest was also an increasingly important part of the medieval economy. The commentator Peter of Poitiers is so wary of how to deal with the question that he declines to consider it: it is a subject 'to be argued about by lawyers not theologians', he says.²¹ Nevertheless, despite what would seem to be a total ban in principle, schoolmen have to give in to external pressures and find ways to allow limited interest-taking in specific, regulated situations.
- (iii) Usury was also suspect because it often involved dealing with Jews. In deciding that the Old Law had force under the New Covenant, Christian theologians were also granting status to the Jews whose Law it was. But just how should they approach Christian-Jewish relations? We have seen that the division of the commandments on the two tablets was a Christianization of the text, but it is important to ask, in broader terms, if the exposition of the Decalogue was consciously anti-Jewish, or if it was merely the site of what we might call casual anti-Judaism. This seems to have very much depended on the individual commentator and his situation. The Franciscan Bonaventure and the Dominican Simon of Hinton, for instance, were two mendicant scholars working at much the same time in the 1260s, Bonaventure in Paris, Simon in Oxford. Speaking to his fellow Franciscans, a group of high-flying young clerics in Paris, Bonaventure's tone is generally distinguished by its pastoral sympathy; but when it comes to the Jews, the register is noticeably different. He says the Old Law had to work through fear, because the Jews were 'stiff-necked and prone to evil'; he says that the commandment to honour parents was necessary for Jews because they generally neglect their parents; and he notes a Jewish fondness for swearing oaths on idols, implying that idolatry was common to them.²² All his remarks on Jews are perceptibly at odds with his normal voice.

In comparison, Simon of Hinton was working in Oxford, a city with the most learned and cultured Jewish community in England. The Dominicans and the Jews lived next to one another just outside the city walls.²³

21 Peter of Poitiers, *Sententiarum libri quinque*, Patrologia Latina 211, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1855) 789–1280: IV, c. 4 (1152A).

22 Bonaventure, *Commentarius in IV Libros Sententiarum*, in *Opera Omnia* 1–4 (Quaracchi: 1882–1889) III, dist. 40, art. 1, qu. 1.

23 Simon deals with the commandments in three works: a set of unedited *Quaestiones* (which contains many of his observations on Jews), found in London, British Library, Royal MS 9

Simon's Dominican students (not as ambitious as those in Paris) were training as Christian apologists, but in Oxford they would have known a formidable group of other-believers. Simon has many references to Jews, both explicit and implicit, and he certainly appears to recognise the attractive power of the exotic community over his impressionable students. He warns them not to be complicit in food rituals—something which sounds very like taking part in Seder or Sabbath meals, adding that if Christians were seen to observe the Sabbath and not Sunday, they might appear to be 'judaising'—a medieval term of abuse for those who grew too fond of the enemy. He stresses that there should be no unnecessary contact with Jews; no sharing baths or washing with them; no living in their midst; no taking medicine from them—and Jews were known for their medical skill. Jews, he says, are more likely to commit secret offences and hidden sins, which is probably a technical reference to the taking of usury.

Simon of Hinton in Oxford and Bonaventure in Paris both criticise the Jews, but they do so in different ways. Although Simon's is the longer discussion, it is more clearly focussed and responsive to his actual situation; he appears to be speaking with real knowledge of a Jewish community. His instructions seem to stem from a fear, born of experience, that his students will be so fascinated by their separated neighbours that they will entangle themselves in situations and arguments where they will be out of their depth; instead of being community leaders, they will make Christians look foolish.

Simon's words are directed squarely at the students themselves. Bonaventure, on the other hand, is dealing with a much more theoretical situation. His remarks about Jews (whom he does not give the impression of knowing) are insults directed at them, rather than guidance for his brother-students. This distance gives what he says a nastier edge than Simon's more homespun warnings. In Simon, the world seems to have entered the classroom, and Simon's response resonates with lived experience. In Bonaventure, on the other hand, the classroom speaks to the world, but his words are less convincingly grounded in actual knowledge.

E. XIV, fols. 117v–133r; the *Summa ad instructionem iuniorum*, printed among the works of Jean Gerson: "Tractatus de Decem Praeceptis", in "Penitentes ad fidei dogmata", in *Joannis Gersonii Opera omnia*, vol. 1, pt. 3 (Antwerp: 1706); and *Exceptiones* to the *Summa*, ed. P.A. Walz, in "The *Exceptiones* from the *Summa* of Simon of Hinton", *Angelicum* 13 (1936) 283–368. For the Jews of Oxford see (still): Roth C., *The Jews of Mediaeval Oxford*, Oxford Historical Society, n.s. 9 (Oxford: 1951).

In summary, then, the Decalogue was rather ignored by Christian commentators until its appearance in the twelfth-century schools; but when Peter Lombard included it in the *Sentences* it became embedded in the classroom curriculum. Lombard's attention ensured not just the inclusion of the commandments, but also the manner in which they were approached by the schoolmen—their working method led to a general conformity of approach and opinion. But the schools were not an ivory tower, with interpretations entirely cut off from the practices and pressures of the Christian world. Individual commentators could introduce new ideas and new genres of interpretation; and in the thirteenth century, when the commandments were established as part of the pastoral literature developed by the Mendicant Orders and in response to the Fourth Lateran Council, Decalogue exegesis expanded to suit the needs of new situations and new audiences.

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‘Ché, se potuto aveste veder tutto / mestier non era parturir Maria’: Dante on the Decalogue as a Means to Salvation*

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In memory of Jean Marie Van Cangh O.P.

1 Introduction: Should We Treat Dante’s Writings as Theological Works?

This essay aims to present a particular aspect of what we might refer to as ‘Dante’s theology’: it aims to find out why Dante is silent about the Ten Commandments. If Dante conceived his *Comedy*, as I claim, as a book which shows the path to salvation, it is rather surprising that he does not mention the Ten Commandments, as they were presented as a path to salvation in medieval catechetical practice; therefore, Dante’s silence needs to be explained. Such an explanation, as it seeks a theological answer, requires treating the *Comedy* as a theological text. Unlike the first readers of the *Comedy*, however, contemporary readers do not agree that Dante’s *Comedy* is a work with a detectable theological meaning.¹ Alongside more ‘traditional’ Dante scholars, who accept the idea of reading a theology beyond the surface of Dante’s poetry,² some scholars prefer to focus on the structure of the *Comedy* and on its formal value. Teodolinda Barolini has produced a very

* I thank Youri Desplenter and the anonymous reviewers for their invaluable comments on a previous draft of this paper. Remaining mistakes are only mine.

1 Bruno Nardi advocated caution in dealing with the theological meaning of Dante’s works. In a review of the German theologian C. Stange’s *Beatrice in Dantes Jugenddichtung* (Göttingen – Berlin – Frankfurt: 1959), Nardi wrote that many interpreters, including P. Mandonet, have attributed their own philosophical and theological ideas to Dante (see Nardi B., “Beatrice e la poesia giovanile di Dante tra le mani di un teologo”, *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 139 (1962) 52). His works undoubtedly remain a point of reference in Dante studies for his historical analyses of the philosophical and theological sources of Dante’s poetry and of the theoretical meaning of Dante’s works. The present essay has the ambition of following in the steps of Nardi in this ‘theoretical’ approach to Dante’s works.

2 For an example of this approach, see: Bausi F., *Dante fra scienza e sapienza. Esegesi del canto XII del Paradiso* (Firenze: 2009).

fine attempt at 'detheologizing Dante'. Her approach has the goal of dismissing the apparent dichotomy between Dante's 'poetry' and Dante's 'theology' in his masterpiece.³ As she is willing to acknowledge, this approach contrasts with the explicit suggestions provided by Dante himself, who wanted his readers to focus on the theological meaning of his oeuvre. Furthermore, the theological reading of the *Comedy* was the preferred reading of Dante's first readers.⁴ Since it is not uncommon in recent scholarship to focus on the historical reception of a classical text, it is not surprising that the 'theological' approach of Dante's first readers is still popular among more traditional Dante scholars.⁵ Thus, recent scholarship has devoted a great deal of attention to Dante's philosophy and theology.⁶ Whereas scholars like Bruno Nardi were mostly concerned with the sources of Dante's thought, contemporary scholars aim at outlining the philosophical and theological thought implicit in Dante's writings.

2 *The Comedy's Goal According to Dante*

Much like late ancient and medieval commentators, we are entitled to ask about the goal (σκοπός) of Dante's masterpiece.⁷ The structure of the *Comedy*

3 Barolini T., *The Undivine Comedy. Detheologizing Dante* (Princeton: 1992).

4 Cf. Sandkühler B., *Die frühen Danteskommentare und ihr Verhältnis zur mittelalterlichen Kommentartradition* (Munich: 1967); Bellomo S., "La 'Commedia' attraverso gli occhi dei primi lettori", in Battaglia Ricci L. (ed.), *Leggere Dante* (Ravenna: 2003) 73–84.

5 See for instance: Bausi F., *Dante fra scienza e sapienza*, 12–15 (Bausi refers to the readings proposed by U. Bosco and G. Gorni).

6 See for instance: Moevs C., *The Metaphysics of Dante's 'Comedy'* (Oxford: 2005); Porro P., "Tra il 'Convivio' e la 'Commedia': Dante e il 'forte dubitare' intorno al desiderio naturale di conoscere le sostanze separate", in Speer A. – Wirmer D. (eds.), 1308. *Eine Topographie historischer Gleichzeitigkeit* (Berlin – New York: 2010) 631–659; Falzone P., *Desiderio della scienza e desiderio di Dio nel Convivio di Dante* (Bologna: 2010); Robiglio A.A., "Traditie en individueel talent. Een filosofisch portret van Dante", *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 75, 2 (2013) 283–310; Corbett G., *Dante and Epicurus. A Dualistic Vision of Secular and Spiritual Fulfilment* (London: 2013); and Barański Z.G., "Dante and Doctrine (and Theology)", in Honess C.E. – Treherne M. (eds.), *Reviewing Dante's Theology. Volume I* (Oxford – Bern – Berlin – Brussels – Frankfurt a.M. – New York – Vienna: 2013) 9–63. Concerning the sources and the context of Dante's original philosophical synthesis, it is necessary to refer to the excellent edition of the *Convivio* with commentary, prepared by G. Fioravanti. See especially: Fioravanti G., "Introduzione", in Alighieri Dante, *Opere. Convivio, Monarchia, Epistole, Egloge*, eds. M. Santagata – G. Fioravanti – C. Giunta – D. Quagliioni – C. Villa – G. Albanese (Milan: 2014) 6–79.

7 On the purpose of the *Comedy*, see: Barolini T., "Why Did Dante Write the *Commedia*?" or The Vision Thing", *Dante Studies* 111 (1993) 1–8; and Hollander R., "Why Did Dante Write the *Comedy*?", *Dante Studies* 111 (1993) 19–25.

suggests that the text deals with a spiritual journey leading from sin to salvation. The *célèbre incipit* depicts Dante as lost in a dark forest, whereas the final lines of the *Paradiso* describe the poet's mystical experience. Dante is allowed to fix his eyes on the Trinity, and he sees that it is Love which moves the sun and the other stars. The famous *incipit* runs as follows:

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
ché la diritta via era smarrita.
Ahi quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura
esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte
che nel pensier rinova la paura!

Inf. 1 1–6⁸

The goal of human life is to fix our sight on God's light, which makes us similar to God himself:

A quella luce cotal si diventa,
che volgersi da lei per altro aspetto
è impossibil che mai si consenta;

Par. XXXIII 100–102⁹

However, after viewing the essence of the Trinity, the poet finds himself unable to describe it further. His will and desire, nevertheless, are still stirred by the Love 'che move il sole e l'altre stelle':

A l'alta fantasia qui mancò possa;
ma già volgeva il mio disio e 'l velle,

-
- 8 When I had journeyed half of our life's way,
I found myself within a shadowed forest,
for I had lost the path that does not stray.
Ah, it is hard to speak of what it was,
that savage forest, dense and difficult,
which even in recall renews my fear (*The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno*, trans. A. Mandelbaum, Los Angeles, 1980, 2–3).
- 9 Whoever sees that Light is soon made such
that it would be impossible for him
to set that Light aside for other sight (*The Divine Comedy: Paradiso*, trans. A. Mandelbaum 1984, 294–295).

sì come rota ch'igualmente è mossa,
l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle.

Par. XXXIII, 142–145¹⁰

From error and sin, the journey has led the poet to contemplate God's essence, and that is what salvation consists in, according to Christian dogma. Salvation is eternal, as is clear from v. 101–102 of *Par.* XXXIII: 'volgersi da lei per altro aspetto / è impossibil che mai si consenta' ('it would be impossible for him to set that Light aside for other sight'). The very structure of the *Comedy* suggests that the work is meant to show mortal men the path to salvation. This intention is made explicit by the poet in at least two passages of his poem. In *Purgatorio* XXXII, Beatrice prophesizes Dante's future, and announces to him that he shall be a citizen of heaven; in order to help his fellow men, Dante is urged to pay close attention to what he is going to see, and to record it for the world's benefit ('in pro del mondo che mal vive'):

"Qui sarai tu poco tempo silvano;
e sarai meco senza fine cive
di quella Roma onde Cristo è romano.
Però, in pro del mondo che mal vive,
al carro tieni or li occhi, e quel che vedi,
ritornato di là, fa che tu scrive."

Purg. XXXII 100–105¹¹

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- 10 Here force failed my high fantasy; but my desire and will were moved already—like a wheel revolving uniformly—by the Love that moves the sun and the other stars (*The Divine Comedy: Paradiso*, trans. A. Mandelbaum 1984, 296–297). Analogous observations are made by Dante in *Par.* I, 1–9. Here he states that nobody can recount what he saw in God's light, nor can his memory recollect the nature of his mystical vision.
- 11 Here you shall be—awhile—a visitor; but you shall be with me—and without end—Rome's citizen, the Rome in which Christ is Roman; and thus, to profit that world which lives badly, watch the chariot steadfastly and, when you have returned beyond, transcribe what you have seen (*The Divine Comedy: Purgatorio*, trans. A. Mandelbaum 1982, 286–287).

An even more explicit reflection on the purpose of the *Comedy* is found in the *Epistula* to Cangrande della Scala.¹² There the author of the *Epistula* writes:

Nam si totius operis litteraliter sumpti sic est subiectum, status animarum post mortem non contractus sed simpliciter acceptus, manifestum est quod hac in parte [i.e.: in heaven] talis status est subiectum, sed contractus, scilicet status animarum beatarum post mortem. Et si totius operis allegorice sumpti subiectum est homo prout merendo et demerendo per arbitrii libertatem est iustitie premiandi et puniendi obnoxius, manifestum est in hac parte hoc subiectum contrahi, et est homo prout merendo obnoxius est iustitie premiandi.

DANTE ALIGHIERI, *Epistola* XIII 33–34¹³

This passage expounds the anonymous author's conception of the subject matter of Dante's work. Scholars have intensively discussed the author's statement that there is an allegorical way to read the poem. For our present purpose, it is sufficient to emphasize that an early reader of Dante construed the *Comedy* as a poem about the salvation of sinful humankind and, more specifically, about the ineluctable reward of saints and punishment of sinners. The anonymous

12 The authorship of the *Epistula* is uncertain. For a detailed discussion of the authorship of this work, see: Alighieri Dante, *Das Schreiben an Cangrande della Scala*, trans. – ed. R. Ricklin (Hamburg: 1993); and Hollander R., *Dante's Epistle to Cangrande* (Ann Arbor: 1993). See also: Barański Z.G., "The Epistle to Can Grande", in Minnis A. – Johnson I. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism. II. The Middle Ages* (Cambridge: 2005) 583–589; Azzetta L., "Le chiose alla 'Commedia' di Andrea Lancia, l'Epistola a Cangrande e altre questioni dantesche", *L'Alighieri: rassegna bibliografica dantesca* XXI (2003) 5–76; and Casadei A., *Dante oltre la Commedia* (Bologna: 2013) esp. 15–43. Among the most recent contributions, Azzetta's suggests that the *Epistula* to Cangrande may have been written by Dante, whereas Casadei underlines the many inconsistencies that suggest the text was compiled by somebody else. I find the reasons adduced for rejecting the authenticity of the *Epistula* to be quite compelling, and I share Casadei's conclusions. Nevertheless, I believe that the *Epistula* bears witness to the early reception of Dante's *Comedy*. Even if the *Epistula* was not actually written by Dante, as some scholars maintain, the text would square nicely with Dante's own reflections—scattered throughout the *Comedy*—on the purpose of the poem, and might be read as an explanatory summation of these reflections.

13 'If from the literal standpoint the subject of the whole work is the state of souls after death in general, i.e. *simpliciter*, it is clear that in this part [of the work] the subject is identical, though restricted to blessed souls after death. And if from the allegorical standpoint the subject is a human being, in as much as he or she is liable to be rewarded or punished by justice, according to his or her merits or sins, it is therefore clear that in this section of the book the subject is specified, namely, it is a human being who deserves a just reward, according to his or her merits' (my translation).

author of this celebrated forgery was not alone in interpreting Dante's masterpiece in this way. Guido da Pisa (d. c. 1350) is the first known commentator on Dante's *Comedy*. Critics have often discussed his claim that Dante might be regarded as a prophet.¹⁴ What matters for us is that Guido clearly believed that the *Comedy* reveals the path to salvation.

Est autem principalis eius intentio removeere viventes a statu miserie, relinquendo peccata et sic composuit Infernum; reducere ad virtutes, et sic composuit Purgatorium; ut sic eos perducatur ad gloriam, et sic composuit Paradisum.¹⁵

Guido continues by stating that other secondary goals might be discernible in the *Comedy*, but he avers that Dante's chief aim was to convert his readers, so that they could inherit the kingdom of God. This opinion was shared by the other early commentators on Dante's masterpiece.

14 S. Bellomo has stressed, however, that Guido da Pisa's reading of Dante is more sophisticated than it is usually presumed, and it can hardly be maintained that Guido believed that Dante actually experienced the vision he describes. On this issue see again Bellomo, *La 'Commedia' attraverso gli occhi dei primi lettori* 78–79.

15 Pisa Guido da, *Expositiones et glose super Comoediam Dantis or Commentary on Dante's Inferno*, ed. V. Cioffari (Albany: 1974) 4: 'his [i.e., Dante's] main goal is to move people away from their state of misery, by abandoning sins (and this is why he wrote the Inferno), and to invite them to practice virtues (and this is why he wrote the Purgatorio), in order to bring them to glory (and this is why he wrote the Paradiso)' (my translation). Analogously, Pietro Alighieri, in *Il 'Commentarium' di Pietro Alighieri nelle redazioni ashburnhamiana e ottoboniana*, eds. R. Della Vedova – M.T. Silvotti (Firenze: 1978) 8, observes that 'causa vero finalis in hoc poemate est ut, descriptis penis, cruciatibus et suppliciis contentis in hoc suo libro, rationabiliter contingendis vitiosis, ac laudibus et gloriis contingendis virtuosis, vitiosos homines a vitiis removeat, et remotos ad purgandum se ipsos dirigat, ut dicit psalmista: *docebo iniquos vias tuas, et impii ad te convertentur*; atque perfectos in sanctitate et virtute corroboret' ('in this poem the final cause [i.e., the goal] is to move the wicked men away from their vices and to lead the converted ones to do penance (as the Psalmist says: "I will teach the wicked your ways and the impious men will return to you.") and to confirm in holiness and virtue those who have attained perfection, by describing the punishments, the torments and the tortures included in his book, which will reasonably be experienced by the wicked, and the praises and glories which will be experienced by the virtuous ones.') (Alighieri Pietro, *Il 'Commentarium' di Pietro Alighieri nelle redazioni ashburnhamiana e ottoboniana*, eds. R. Della Vedova – M.T. Silvotti (Firenze: 1978), 8). This idea is shared by later commentators, such as Giovanni da Serravalle. See on this: Robiglio A.A., 'La latitudine della nobiltà. Una questione filosofica nel Commento di Giovanni da Serravalle alla Divina Commedia', *Rassegna Europea di Letteratura Italiana* 33 (2009) 31–49, esp. 31.

3 The Ten Commandments as a Path to Salvation

Dante's goal in writing the *Comedy*, then, was to exhibit the path to salvation: the early reception of his work, its structure, and Dante's assertions agree on this point. If this is the case, one might expect to find the Ten Commandments expounded somewhere in the *Comedy*, given that they were seen by medieval catechists as the surest guide to salvation.¹⁶ Another Italian poet, Fazio degli Uberti (first half of the fourteenth century), for instance, refers in his encyclopedic poem, *Dittamondo*, to God's conferral of the Decalogue on Moses.

Moisè fu legisto e con gran fè;
la lingua non avea bene spedita:
ma qui non dico la cagion perchè.

[...]

Parve al popolo suo che troppo fosse
Moisè sopra il monte, perchè un toro
fe' d'or, col quale a idolar si mosse.

Tornato e visto il peccato loro,
le tavol de la legge infranse e ruppe;
poi arse l'idol fabbricato d'oro.¹⁷

Nothing comparable to Fazio's brief reference to the event on Mount Sinai appears anywhere in Dante's oeuvre, and this is surprising on a number of counts. Firstly, there is the evangelical story of the rich young man, which seems to suggest that observance of the Ten Commandments would result in salvation.

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- 16 Peter C. Erb has shown that some early fourteenth-century preaching materials in English place emphasis on the Decalogue; this is an important discovery, since these vernacular texts were clearly meant to assist in the instruction of uncultivated people, see: Erb P.C., "Vernacular Material for Preaching in MS Cambridge University Library li. iii. 8", *Medieval Studies* 26 (1971) 63–84. It is a commonplace that the Lutheran reform stressed the importance of the Decalogue sermons addressed to the uneducated; see on this point: Thum V., *Die Zehn Gebote für die ungelahrten Leut'. Der Dekalog in der Graphik des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin – Munich: 2006). These examples prove that in the late Middle Ages there was an increasing emphasis on the Decalogue, especially in vernacular writings addressed to the uneducated.
- 17 Uberti Fazio degli, *Dittamondo*, book VI, c. II, vv. 4–6, 19–24. 'Moses was a lawgiver and had great faith. He was not a great rhetorician, but I do not say here the reason why he was not. [...] His people thought that Moses stayed too long on the mountain, and for this reason they built a golden bull, and they began to adore it. When he was back and saw their sin, he broke the tables of the law; subsequently, he burned the golden idol' (my translation).

Secondly, medieval catechesis commonly emphasizes that observation of the Ten Commandments is the surest path to salvation available to the unlettered. I shall briefly dwell on these two points.

1. The Bible has many insights concerning the path to salvation. In the thirteenth century, however, much attention was paid to the Decalogue as the key to inheriting the kingdom of heaven. The biblical evidence for this pastoral practice was the dialogue between the rich young man and Jesus. This dialogue appears in all three of the synoptic gospels. *Matthew* and *Luke* include a shorter version of it, *Mark* adds more particulars. If the two-sources hypothesis is correct, as many scholars maintain,¹⁸ this is evidence that both the gospels of Luke and of Matthew presented a summarized version of what they could read in Mark. Here are the three texts:

<i>Mark</i> 10:17–21	<i>Matthew</i> 19:16–19	<i>Luke</i> 18:18–20
¹⁷ et cum egressus esset in viam procurrens quidam genu flexo ante eum rogabat eum magister bone quid faciam ut vitam aeternam percipiam ¹⁸ Iesus autem dixit ei quid me dicis bonum nemo bonus nisi unus Deus ¹⁹ praecepta nosti ne adulteres ne occidas ne fureris ne falsum testimonium dixeris ne fraudem feceris honora patrem tuum et matrem ²⁰ et ille respondens ait illi magister omnia haec conservavi a iuventute mea ²¹ Iesus autem intuitus eum dilexit eum. ^a	¹⁶ et ecce unus accedens ait illi magister bone quid boni faciam ut habeam vitam aeternam ¹⁷ qui dixit ei quid me interrogas de bono unus est bonus Deus si autem vis ad vitam ingredi serva mandata ¹⁸ dicit illi quae Iesus autem dixit non homicidium facies non adulterabis non facies furtum non falsum testimonium dices ¹⁹ honora patrem et matrem et diliges proximum tuum sicut te ipsum. ^b	¹⁸ et interrogavit eum quidam princeps dicens magister bone quid faciens vitam aeternam possidebo ¹⁹ dixit autem ei Iesus quid me dicis bonum nemo bonus nisi solus Deus ²⁰ mandata nosti non occides non moechaberis non furtum facies non falsum testimonium dices honora patrem tuum et matrem. ^c

¹⁸ This hypothesis suggests that *Matthew* and *Luke* consulted two common sources: the gospel of Mark and the so-called Q source. For an attempt to disentangle the Q source, see Neirynck F., *Q-Parallels. Q-Synopsis and IQP/CritEd Parallels* (Louvain: 2001).

- a 'As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother.'" He replied and said to him, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth." Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." (translation from *The New American Bible*, New York: 1970).
- b 'Now someone approached him and said, "Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?" He answered him, "Why do you ask me about the good? There is only One who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." He asked him, "Which ones?" And Jesus replied, "'You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother'; and 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (translation from *The New American Bible*).
- c 'An official asked him this question, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother'" (transl. from *The New American Bible*).

As is clear, Jesus states that in order to inherit the kingdom of heaven—that is, in order to be saved—men and women must abide by the commandments. By 'commandments', He was possibly referring to the Ten Commandments, but certainly not to strict Jewish observance of the Law, as scholars expert in the cultural background of Jesus' moral doctrine and theology have emphasized.¹⁹ This is not the place to discuss the exact meaning of these three excerpts from the synoptic gospels, nor would it be useful to address the complicated question of what Jesus is actually saying here about salvation. It is worth mentioning, however, that thirteenth-century theologians read these passages as underscoring the vital importance of the Ten Commandments as instruments of salvation. This conclusion was derived exegetically, of course, since an explicit statement to this effect appears nowhere in the gospels.²⁰

19 On this point, see especially: Van Canghai.-M., *Les sources judaïques du Nouveau Testament* (Louvain – Paris – Dudley, MA: 2008).

20 In support of this claim, see: Aquinas Thomas, *Super Evangelium S. Matthaei lectura* (Taurini – Rome: 1951) *caput XIX*, n. 1586, p. 243: '*Dicit ei adolescens: omnia haec custodivi a iuventute mea. Postquam dominus tradidit doctrinam communis salutis, hic tradit doctrinam perfectionis*' ('*The young man told Him: I kept all this from my youth. After having*

2. Thomas Aquinas concurs with this idea in his short treatise *De decem praeceptis* where he presents the Decalogue as the sine qua non of salvation. As we shall see, this does not square with Aquinas's more elaborate theological reflections elsewhere: the position he takes in *De decem praeceptis* results from its function—a guide for preachers to the lower classes. In other words, even though Aquinas's understanding of the Ten Commandments was more sophisticated than appears in this treatise, he saw no problem in agreeing with his contemporaries that the Decalogue offers a sure path to salvation.

In the opening lines of the sermon *De decem praeceptis*, Aquinas maintains:

Tria sunt homini necessaria ad salutem: scilicet scientia credendorum, scientia desiderandorum, et scientia operandorum. Primum docetur in symbolo, ubi traditur scientia de articulis fidei; secundum in oratione dominica; tertium autem in lege.²¹

If we take Aquinas's statement as normative, then the absence of any explicit statement to this effect in the *Comedy* is puzzling: if Dante puts forth his poem as a guide to salvation, why does he not mention the Ten Commandments? Before answering this question, it may be useful to examine the references to the Decalogue in Dante's other writings. However, these references prove to be quite scarce. In the *Comedy* itself, Dante refers to Moses no more than twice. In *Inferno* IV, Moses is said to be an obedient lawgiver:

expounded the common doctrine of salvation, here the Lord expounds the doctrine of perfection', my translation). According to Aquinas, the doctrine of salvation, as distilled in the passage from *Matthew*, consists in keeping the commandments (even though this is not sufficient, as we shall see in what follows). Aquinas's exegesis maintains that Jesus' dialogue with the rich young man distinguishes between common perfection—that is, keeping the commandments—and the state of perfection, which involves maintenance of the *consilia*, namely, poverty, chastity and obedience; see also: Aquinas Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, IIa-IIae, qu. 184, a. 3; Contra Gent. III, 130. The Venerable Bede, as quoted by Aquinas in *Catena aurea. Expositio in Marcum* (Taurini – Rome: 1953) caput x 3, 509–510, explicitly upholds this reading of the synoptic gospels.

- 21 Thomas Aquinas, *De decem praeceptis*, Prooemium. 'Human beings need three things in order to be saved: knowledge of the things in which they must believe, knowledge of the things which should be wished, and knowledge of what should be done. The first is taught in the creed, where it is expounded within the articles of faith; the second is taught in the "Our Father"; the third is taught in the law' (my translation).

Trasseci l'ombra del primo parente,
d'Abèl suo figlio e quella di Noè,
di Moisè legista e ubidente;

Inf. IV, 55–57²²

Dante is talking about the liberation of the righteous men who had lived before the coming of Christ and were waiting in Limbo for His arrival. Moses, whom Dante presents as 'the obedient lawgiver', was liberated alongside Abel, Noah, Abraham and others.

In *Par.* XXIV Dante affirms his faith and states that it is based on Scripture. In this context, he refers once again to Moses:

e a tal creder non ho io pur prove
fisice e metafisice, ma dalmi
anche la verità che quinci piove

per Moisè, per profeti e per salmi,
per l'Evangelio e per voi che scrivate
poi che l'ardente Spirto vi fé almi;

Par. XXIV, 133–138²³

Dante often refers to the virtue of obedience and the importance of keeping the commandments. In *Convivio* IV 24 Dante states that young people should observe the 'commandments' which have been given to them by their elders, since adults have more experience of the world and are less vulnerable to passions and emotions. In *Convivio* I 7 Dante sings the praises of obedience. In *Convivio* III 15 he describes the commandments as gifts issuing from divine wisdom. It is safe to state that the Decalogue plays virtually no role within

22 He carried off the shade of our first father,
of his son Abel, and the shade of Noah,
of Moses, the obedient legislator (*The Divine Comedy: Inferno*, trans. A. Mandelbaum 1980,
32–33).

23 For this belief I have not only proofs
both physical and metaphysical;
I also have the truth that here rains down
through Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms
and through the Gospels and through you who wrote
words given to you by the Holy Ghost (*The Divine Comedy: Paradiso*, trans. A. Mandelbaum
1984, 216–217).

Dante's economy of salvation.²⁴ So again we should ask ourselves: why is this the case?

4 An Attempt at Justifying Dante's Silence

As must be clear by now, we are trying to find reasons for Dante's relative silence regarding the Decalogue. I would suggest that contrary to the prevailing soteriology of his time, Dante explores a different theological perspective on humanity's path to the kingdom of heaven. This theological perspective largely derives from Aquinas's theology of grace. Scholars such as Bruno Nardi and, more recently, Paolo Falzone and Pasquale Porro have rightly noted that Dante's philosophy and theology are highly original, inasmuch as they originate from various sources which the poet synthesized in a novel manner.²⁵ It has often been thought that Nardi implies that Dante detached himself from Thomas Aquinas, or that Aquinas did not play a central role in the formation of Dante's original synthesis. This commonly held view is quite inaccurate.²⁶

24 John Took has recently discussed Dante's reception of Augustine's reading of the precept 'love thy neighbour'; he argues that Dante 'has a sense of due order in loving, of the way in which, as the ground and guarantee of its efficacy as a principle of properly human being and becoming, each and every instance of contingent loving in man [...] stands at last to be taken up in the kind of love given with the act itself of existence, in the ultimate yearning of the soul for God as co-eval and co-extensive with being itself' (Took J., "Arendt, Augustine, Dante and loving one's neighbour" in Kinder J.J. – Glenn D. (eds.), *Legato con amore in un volume. Essays in Honour of John A. Scott* (Firenze: 2013) 112–113). Took is highly persuasive in singling out the Augustinian character of Dante's thoughts on love; his essay confirms that Dante neglects to link the love for one's neighbour to salvation.

25 See in particular: Nardi B., *Studi di filosofia medievale* (Rome: 1960) 9–68. Falzone (*Desiderio della scienza*, 226–227) and Porro (*Tra il 'Convivio' e la 'Commedia'*, 657–659) agree in maintaining that Henri of Ghent was one of the possible sources of Dante.

26 On Nardi's interpretation of Dante's philosophy, see: Falzone P., "Bruno Nardi's Louvain Dissertation (1911) and the Uneasy Character of Dante's Philosophy", *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie*, 75, 2 (2013) 357–373. E. Gilson is usually credited with having identified Dante's debts to his sources, most importantly to Aquinas. In fact, his account of Dante's philosophical and theological synthesis is very nuanced: 'if, as is asserted, a 'unifying vision' of his work exists, it cannot be identified with any philosophy, or with a political cause, or even with a theology [...]. Dante's work does not constitute a system, but is the dialectical and lyrical expression of all his loyalties' (Gilson E., *Dante the Philosopher* (London: 1948), 281). Similar conclusions were also reached by Barański, *Dante and Doctrine (and Theology)* esp. 56–61.

Nardi was too rigorous a scholar not to have noticed the frequent allusions to Aquinas's ideas in Dante's work. He was correct to do so, I think, for the theology of grace which underlies Dante's presentation of the path to salvation is Aquinas's theology of grace.

Aquinas states that the Ten Commandments are some sort of summary of natural law. In his *Summa Theologiae* Ia–IIae 100 art. 1 c, Aquinas states that moral precepts summarize natural law. Shortly thereafter, he maintains that the Decalogue at least implicitly contains the whole of moral precepts, and hence the entirety of natural law.²⁷ The observance of this law is not sufficient, in Aquinas's thought, in order to inherit the kingdom of God. Grace is a prerequisite to the desire and the ability to practice the evangelical law, the observance of which is able to save humankind. Again, Aquinas is explicit on this point: he states that humans may respect the moral precepts without grace,²⁸ but adds that it is unconceivable that we may inherit the kingdom of heaven without grace.²⁹

In his *Comedy*, Dante makes several statements which can be read against the background of the doctrine outlined by Thomas Aquinas.³⁰ It thus seems that Dante shares the idea that Christ's grace is necessary for salvation. This is

27 Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* Ia.–IIae, qu. 100, art. 3 c.

28 Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Ibid.*, qu. 109, art. 4 c.

29 Thomas Aquinas, *Ibid.*, qu. 109, art. 5 c: 'Vita [...] aeterna est finis excedens proportionem naturae humanae [...]. Et ideo homo per sua naturalia non potest producere opera meritoria proportionata vitae aeternae, sed ad hoc exigitur altior virtus, quae est virtus gratiae. Et ideo sine gratia homo non potest mereri vitam aeternam. Potest tamen facere opera perducentia ad aliquod bonum homini connaturale, sicut laborare in agro, bibere, manducare, et habere amicum, et alia huiusmodi' (Now everlasting life is an end exceeding the proportion of human nature [...] Hence man, by his natural endowments, cannot produce meritorious works proportionate to everlasting life; and for this a higher force is needed, viz. the force of grace. And thus without grace man cannot merit everlasting life; yet he can perform works conducing to a good which is natural to man, as "to toil in the fields, to drink, to eat, or to have friends," and the like; translation: *The Summa Theologiae of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, translated by the English Dominicans, 1920).

30 Apparently, in *Paradiso* v, 76–78 Dante seems to be stating that observance of what is expounded in the Old Testament is sufficient for salvation:

Avete il novo e 'l vecchio Testamento,
e 'l pastor de la Chiesa che vi guida;
questo vi basti a vostro salvamento.

You have both Testaments, the Old and New,
you have the shepherd of the Church to guide you;
you need no more than this for your salvation (*The Divine Comedy: Paradiso*, trans. A. Mandelbaum 1984, 42–43).

clear in *Purgatorio* III, 37–45, where Dante maintains that human reason alone is insufficient as an instrument of salvation:

“State contenti, umana gente, al *quia*;
ché, se potuto aveste veder tutto,
mestier non era parturir Maria;

e disiar vedeste sanza frutto
tai che sarebbe lor disio quetato,
ch’eternalmente è dato lor per lutto:

io dico d’Aristotile e di Plato
e di molt’altri”; e qui chinò la fronte,
e più non disse, e rimase turbato.

Purg. III, 37–45³¹

Since human salvation consists in grasping God’s essence (cf. *Par.* XXXIII), Dante is implicitly saying that without the mystery of the Incarnation human beings could not have been saved, however closely they observed the Ten Commandments. Revelation, and hence God’s intervention, is the crucial prerequisite of salvation:

If we were to take the reference to the Old Testament as a reference to Mosaic law, it would follow that observance of the Decalogue (or, possibly, of the whole of Moses’s precepts) is a sufficient cause of salvation. However, this very passage adds that the law of the New Testament and ecclesiastical laws should be observed. Within the general context of the *Comedy*, Dante seems to mean that the Bible (‘il novo e ’l vecchio Testamento’) and the church’s authority (‘e ’l pastor de la Chiesa che vi guida’) offer sure guidance to find the path to salvation to all who wish to be saved; this path to salvation entails faith and charity, not mere observance of the law.

- 31 ‘Confine yourselves, o humans, to the *quia*;
had you been able to see all, there would
have been no need for Mary to give birth
You saw the fruitless longing of those men
who would—if reason could—have been content,
those whose desire eternally laments:
I speak of Aristotle and of Plato—
and many others.’ Here he bent his head
and said no more, remaining with his sorrow (*The Divine Comedy: Purgatorio*, trans.
A. Mandelbaum, 1982, 22–23).

Matto è chi spera che nostra ragione
 possa trascorrer la infinita via
 che tiene una sustanza in tre persone.

Purg. III, 34–36³²

In other words, Dante is sharing Aquinas's claim that grace is the necessary and sufficient condition of salvation, whereas keeping the commandments is a necessary but not sufficient condition. There would have been no grace and no charity without Christ's death on the cross, as Dante explains in *Par.* XXVI, the *canto* where saint John asks the poet to expound the nature of charity. The poet answers as follows:

Però ricominciai: "Tutti quei morsi
 che posson far lo cor volgere a Dio,
 a la mia caritate son concorsi:
 ché l'essere del mondo e l'esser mio,
 la morte ch'el sostenne perch'io viva,
 e quel che spera ogne fedel com'io,
 con la predetta conoscenza viva,
 tratto m'hanno del mar de l'amor torto,
 e del diritto m'han posto a la riva.

Le fronde onde s'infronda tutto l'orto
 de l'ortolano eterno, am'io cotanto
 quanto da lui a lor di bene è porto".

Par. XXVI, 55–66³³

-
- 32 Foolish is he who hopes our intellect
 can reach the end of that unending road
 only one Substance in three Persons follows (*The Divine Comedy: Purgatorio*, trans.
 A. Mandelbaum 1982, 22–23).
 In order to grasp this truth, which is necessary for salvation, human beings need faith (cf.
Par. XXIV, 64–66: 'fede è sustanza di cose sperate / e argomento de le non parventi; / e
 questa pare a me sua quiditate' ('faith is the substance of the things we hope for / and is
 the evidence of things not seen; / and this I take to be its quiddity'); see also: *Conv.* II, 2–3
 and the discussion in Corbett, *Dante and Epicurus* 154–161).
- 33 Thus I began again: "My charity
 results from all those things whose bite can bring
 the heart to turn to God; the world's existence
 and mine, the death that He sustained that I
 might live, and that which is the hope of all
 believers, as it is my hope, together

This explains why the *Comedy* pays so little attention to the Ten Commandments, even though Dante conceived it as a guide to salvation. Instead, the *Comedy* devotes much space to the virtue of charity,³⁴ because, as Paul maintained, 'If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have charity, I gain nothing' (1 Cor. 13:3).

5 Conclusion

Readers have interpreted Dante's *Comedy* in different ways. However, the poet certainly intended to guide the interpretation of his masterpiece. The structure of the *Comedy* is designed to present the text as showing the path of salvation to its readers. If one accepts Dante's recommendation to read the *Comedy* in this way, one may wonder in what salvation consists. According to Dante, human beings need God's grace in order to be saved. The observance of the *Decalogue* is certainly necessary, but does not grant salvation. Thomas Aquinas maintained that it is possible to observe the Ten Commandments without God's grace; God asks us to observe them in a higher way. Jesus' answer to the young rich man should be understood as implying that one is saved if one observes the commandments, thanks to the infused virtue of charity that always accompanies grace.

Dante's conception is not entirely new, because it closely follows Aquinas's theology. However, Dante's choice to present this theological conception in Italian is a radical innovation. Most of Dante's works are written in Italian. Despite their theological and philosophical content, Dante intentionally avoids writing his *Comedy* and his *Convivio* in Latin. He does so, because he intends to address a broader public, as he maintains in the opening section of his *Convivio*. In Dante's times, the uneducated were often instructed to observe the Decalogue in order to achieve salvation. This catechetical practice found its rationale in Jesus' words to the young rich man. In their catechetical treatises, medieval preachers often did not add that the observance of the Decalogue

with living knowledge, I have spoken of—
 these drew me from the sea of twisted love
 and set me on the shore of the right love.
 The leaves enleaving all the garden of
 the Everlasting Gardener, I love
 according to the good He gave to them" (*The Divine Comedy: Paradiso*, trans.
 A. Mandelbaum 1984, 230–231).

34 The entire *canto* xxvi of the *Paradiso* is devoted to charity.

grants salvation only if the soul is in the state of grace. This addition might have been perceived as an unnecessary theological subtlety.

Dante chose a radically different approach. He intended to address the less educated classes, but he presented the most advanced theological reflections of his day. Even though the *Comedy* is designed to be a text that shows the path to heaven, Dante does not mention the observance of the Decalogue as a means to salvation. On the contrary, he exclusively focuses on grace and on charity.

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Fit For A Prince: The Ten Alternative Commandments in Christine de Pizan's *Epistre Othea*

Charlotte E. Cooper

The *Epistre Othea* was composed at the start of the fifteenth-century by the Italian-born writer Christine de Pizan. This French text was popular in its day, and is known to survive in fifty-six manuscripts,¹ at least seven of which are believed to be autograph (written in Christine's own hand or produced under her supervision).² Originally dedicated to the king's brother, Louis I, Duke of Orléans, its later transmission in manuscript form was extensive, notably amongst the nobility,³ and it went on to be edited five times between 1499 and circa 1540, including one translation into English.⁴ One of these editions renders the title as *Cent histoires de Troy* (*One Hundred Trojan Tales*), and that is very much the format of this unusual work: one hundred short maxim-like mnemonic quatrains, or 'tales', that take the 'Trojan legend' as their basis. In the manner of an exegesis, each tale is accompanied by several glosses, that I describe in a moment; over a series of ten tales (XXXV–XLIV), one of these glosses links the ten stories to the Ten Commandments. However, I will show here that the Decalogue is not

- 1 Although somewhat dated, Gianni Mombello's study, *La tradizione manoscritta dell' « Epistre Othea » di Christine de Pizan: Prolegomeni all'edizione del testo* (Torino: 1967) is still the most complete point of reference for an overview of the *Othea*'s manuscript tradition. The manuscript listed there as having been sold by Sotheby's in 1825 is referred to here as Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (The National Trust), MS 8.
- 2 Christine de Pizan's autograph manuscripts have been the object of several studies; most notably, Gilbert Ouy et al.'s recent *Album Christine de Pizan* (Turnhout: 2012) offers a detailed description of all fifty-two of her author-manuscripts. However, there is no universal consensus as to which manuscripts are autograph. Sandra Hindman believes one of the manuscripts discussed here—Cambridge, Newnham College, MS 5—to have been produced in Paris earlier in the fifteenth-century than previously thought, possibly under Christine's supervision, see: Hindman, S., *Christine de Pizan's "Epitre Othea": Painting and Politics at the Court of Charles VI* (Toronto: 1986) 141.
- 3 Paris, BnF fr. MS 606, that I discuss here, was presented to Louis d'Orléans as early as 1406, although Paris, BnF fr. MS 848—the earliest version of the text—had already been dedicated to him in circa 1400. Between 1403 and 1404, copies were dedicated to king Charles V of France's brothers, Philippe le Hardi and Jean de Berry, as well as to Henry IV of England. Two copies were also included in manuscript compilations prepared for queen Isabeau de Bavière.
- 4 Further editions may have been lost; see Mombello, *Tradizione manoscritta* 361–363.

presented as ten absolute precepts by which the addressee is instructed to live their life.⁵ On the contrary, the Ten Commandments are implicitly shown to be something other than straightforward precepts, particularly for readers of noble birth. Instead, in the *Epistre Othea*, Christine proposes ten alternative commandments that are given greater prominence in both the text and paratext, and that she considers might prove more useful to her readers. However, this problematisation of the canonical commandments is only hinted at, not made explicit, and Christine's text only subtly suggests that the commandments may not be suited to her addressees. The *Othea* could be interpreted as intending to provoke some sort of debate amongst its readers, or at least to lead them to consider the implications of the sometimes (though not always) conflicting messages encountered in this section of the text. In this paper, I suggest that the conflicting messages in the Ten Commandments section of the *Othea* reveal why Christine chose to highlight the start of this section in the paratext, and can tell us something about how it was intended to be read.

Before examining Christine's treatment of the Ten Commandments in this work, it is first necessary to understand its unusual format. Specific examples in which the commandments are problematised are then considered, and the ten proposed alternative commandments evaluated. Finally, I explore some of the ways in which the literal interpretation of the verses and their mythological content was given greater import at the expense of the religious content in Jean Miélot's reworking of the text, of which two fully-illuminated manuscripts exist, produced approximately forty-one to forty-six years after the last author-copy was prepared; both include substantial alterations to the textual and iconographic programmes.

The *Epistre Othea*

The unusual format of the *Epistre Othea* and its rich iconographic programme have drawn the attention of both literary scholars and art historians.⁶ The former

5 The *Othea*'s original dedicatee was prince Louis d'Orléans, and copies were presented to several other noblemen, but the fact that two manuscripts containing this work were also presented to the Queen suggests that the envisaged readership was not uniquely male, a thesis which there is not space for me to develop here. Although the textual dedicatee and apparent addressee is princely, they were also made up of at least one woman; I therefore refer to the readership using the gender-neutral form, *they/their* throughout this article.

6 The interaction of text and image in the *Othea* is the subject of two detailed studies: Desmond M. – Sheingorn P., *Myth, Montage and Visuality in Late Medieval Manuscript Culture: Christine de Pizan's Epistre Othea* (Ann Arbor: 2003); Hindman, *Painting and Politics*.

have been interested in the way in which this text treats ancient mythology like a religious text: each section of verse, designated as the *texte* in the manuscripts, is accompanied by two prose glosses: one explanatory gloss (*glose*) and an allegorical reading (*allegorie*) that relates the verse to biblical material, often ending with a short Latin quotation from the gospels or one of the Church Fathers.⁷ Together, the one hundred stories make up a letter sent from the goddess Othea to prince Hector of Troy when he was fifteen years old. The art historical interest lies in the fact that through several gradual reworkings of the material, these one hundred stories each came to be illustrated with one hundred illuminations; the miniatures enable us to trace some of Christine's textual sources and to consider some of the ways in which the different versions of this work were either intended to be or actually read.

To illustrate how this tripartite format plays out, let us consider the layout of story xxxv, the first of the Commandment stories, as found in Paris, BnF fr. 606, the earliest autograph copy of *Othea* to comprise a full iconographic programme [Fig. 3.1]. In this manuscript, the three sections of each story—the *texte*, *glose*, and *allegorie*—are clearly distinguished by rubrics and by divisions in the layout of the page. The *texte* section consists of four lines of poetry that exhort the prince to behave in a certain manner—usually by following, or not following, the example of a figure from classical mythology. Here, the verses read:

Bellorophon soit exemplaire
En tous les faiz que tu veulx faire,
Qui mieulz ama vouloir mourir
Que desloyaulté encourir.⁸

The *glose* that follows places these somewhat allusive verses within their mythological context. In this example, this includes clarifying who Bellerophon was and expanding on the story around him: the gloss explains that Bellerophon's

7 Throughout this piece, I use the umbrella term 'story' to refer to the combination of these three textual elements.

8 Christine de Pizan, *Epistre Othea*, ed. G. Parussa (Geneva: 1999) 249. 'Heed Bellerophon's example in all your deeds, [as] he thought it better to die than to risk disloyalty'. All translations are my own. Unless specified, all citations of the *Othea* are all taken from Parussa's excellent edition, which takes London, British Library, MS Harley 4431 as its base manuscript. There being very little textual variance between the two manuscripts, I quote from the published edition as to avoid making a near-identical transcription of fr. 606; any significant textual variants are highlighted in the footnotes.

The illustrations used in this section are all taken from the Paris manuscript, that predates Harley 4431 by four to eight years (Ouy et al.'s *Album* dates fr. 606 to 1406–1408, and Harley 4431 to 1410–1414). It is likely that the Harley manuscript was either copied directly



FIGURE 3.1 *Epistre Othea Master, Bellerophon and his stepmother at the start of the Ten Commandments section, Paris, BnF fr. MS 606, f. 17v.*

REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION.

stepmother was in love with him, and that she asked him to sleep with her.⁹ So as not to risk being disloyal towards his family, Bellerophon refused, and as punishment was condemned to be eaten by wild beasts. Bellerophon's refusal is illustrated in the accompanying image, which shows the Queen gesturing towards him as he turns his back on her. Meanwhile, wild animals are depicted on the cliffs in the background, anticipating Bellerophon's ultimate end and illustrating the content of the *glose*.¹⁰ Finally, the *allegorie* relates the story to a religious context.¹¹ This *allegorie* explains that Bellerophon's loyalty should remind us to be loyal to God, and readers are explicitly told that this story might therefore be taken for the first commandment: 'You shall not have strange Gods before me'.¹² This *allegorie* concludes with a rubricated Latin citation taken from *Matthew* 4:10 ('Dominum Deum tuum adorabis et illi soli servies'; 'The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve').

from fr. 606, or that these two manuscripts shared a common source. Although nearly identical, I have preferred to consistently use images from the earlier manuscript so as to more fully illustrate the changes that the *Othea* underwent over time. The strong similarities in their layout and illustrations are also notable, both in terms of the placement of images within the manuscript, and of their content: with only a few minor exceptions, the locations of the miniatures are identical until *texte* LXXXVIII (ff. 41v and 135v respectively) and, in several cases, the Harley 4431 images could almost have been traced from the earlier copy. An excellent digital copy is available at http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_4431.

- 9 The primary meaning of the Old French word *marrastre* is 'stepmother': Matoré G., *Le vocabulaire et la société médiévale* (Paris: 1985) 211. Raynaud de Lage notes that the pejorative meaning of this word—which survives in modern French's *marâtre* (bad mother)—also existed early on in Old French, and may be being played on here, leading some translations to mistakenly render this as 'bad mother': *Manuel pratique de l'Ancien Français* (Paris: 1964) 207.
- 10 See also Fig. 3.3, in which the queen insistently holds on to Bellerophon. Some copies, including the Waddesdon manuscript, represent Bellerophon awaiting his death, surrounded by wild animals.
- 11 Christine's linking of religious texts and classical mythology is by no means unique. Indeed, 'Some medieval exegetes were so convinced by theological readings of classical mythology that they entertained the possibility that Ovid may have undergone a conversion and become, as it were, a Christian *avant la lettre*'; see: Huot S., "Sentences and Subtle Fictions: Reading Literature in the Later Middle Ages", in Cornilliat F. – Langer U. – Kelly D. (eds.), *What is Literature? France 1100–1600* (Lexington: 1993) 203.
- 12 In this paper, I follow the wording of the Traditional Catechetical Formula set out at http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/command.htm, which most closely resembles Christine's own phrasing. Christine and the traditional formula may both have based their wording on the Vulgate.

Early copies of the *Othea* tend to include only six illuminations: one dedication miniature and one to accompany each of the first five stories. Sandra Hindman has shown that, far from being somehow secondary or complementary to the text, even in Paris, BnF fr. MS 848, the earliest copy of the work, many of the images contain hidden political messages through which Christine sought to remind noble readers of their duties.¹³ This manuscript's three-column format has been seen as encouraging a 'contemplative reading', in which readers are invited to meditate on the connections between the different elements of the text [Fig. 3.2].¹⁴ In this format, two or more *textes* are presented sequentially, in the centre of the page, with the *gloses* in the left column, and the *allegories* to the right. Small numerals next to each section allow readers to connect a given *glose* or *allegorie* with the corresponding *texte*, but their eye can also wander across the page and take in the different elements less sequentially, making connections between different parts of the stories. The illuminations operate in a similar manner. As Hindman notes, 'all three parts of the text of the *Epistre* [*Othea*] are served by these pictures. The miniatures illustrate the texts, the glosses, and the allegories from the perspectives of political, secular, and spiritual allegories'.¹⁵ The images therefore form part of the contemplation that readers are invited to undertake.

From around 1406—the approximate date of the completion of fr. 606—the cycle of illuminations has been expanded such that each of the one hundred stories includes an image.¹⁶ Indeed, the iconographic programme takes on such importance that it might be considered as making up the fourth part of each story (after the *texte*, *glose*, and *allegorie*), with a greater potential for

13 This is the theme of Hindman, *Painting and Politics*, Chapter 3 in particular.

14 Ignatius M.A., "Christine de Pizan's 'Epistre Othéa': An Experiment in Literary Form", *Medievalia et Humanistica* 9 (1979) 127–142.

15 Hindman, *Painting and Politics* 81.

16 Although only two of Christine's autograph manuscripts contain the full iconographic programme, many of the editions prepared in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries continued to reproduce this cycle of illuminations. Readers may wish to refer to Mombello, *Tradizione manoscritta* 346–357 for a full list of *Othea* manuscripts, of which Mombello counts nine containing between 99 and 102 illuminations. At least three of the five editions printed in English and in French from 1499–1545 contain the full programme of illuminations.

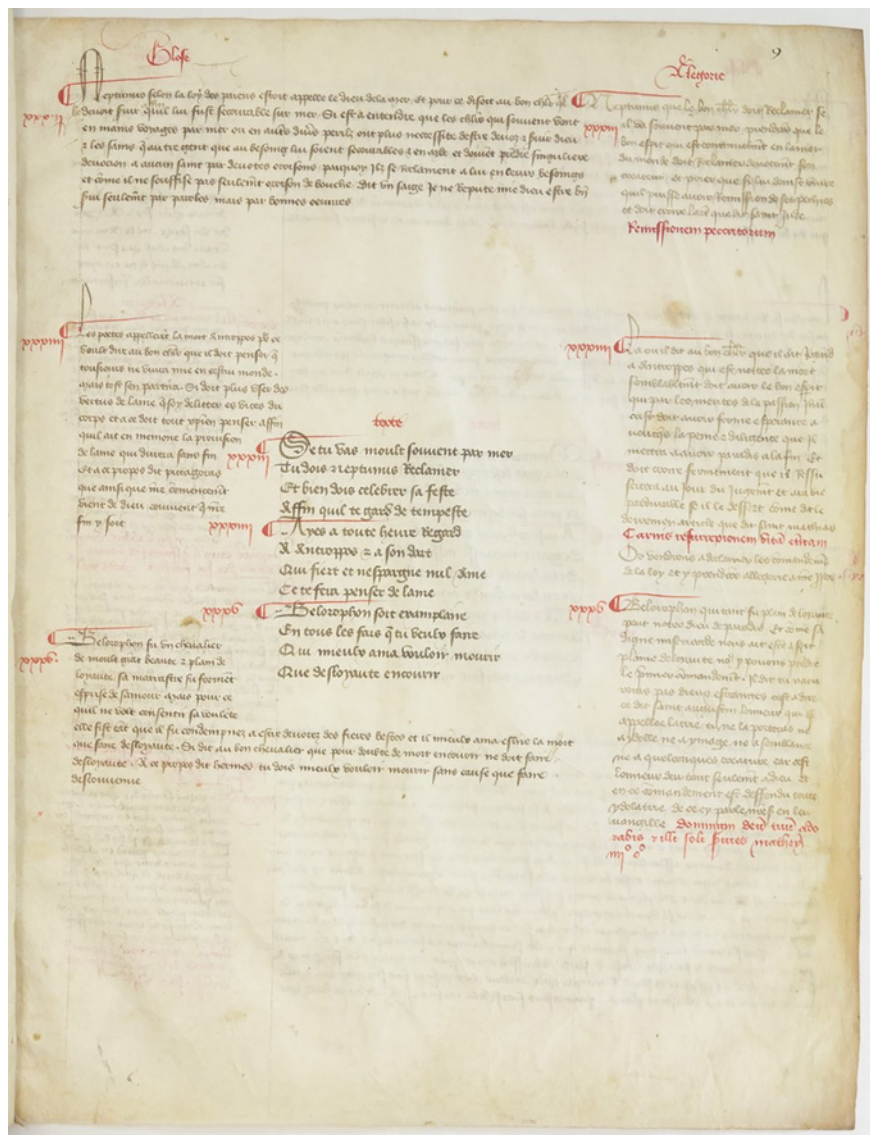


FIGURE 3.2 Start of the Ten Commandments section, Paris, BnF fr. MS 848, f. 9r.

REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION.

the inclusion of further messages. However, as the programme of illuminations was extended, images ceased to illustrate all three parts of the text in the manner Hindman describes. Moreover, the stories were now presented sequentially, in a two-column format, meaning that the *glose* and *allegorie* now appear to relate to a single *texte*. A 'contemplative' reading that makes connections between the different stories is therefore no longer possible in this new layout. The Bellerophon illumination, in which any reference to the content of the *allegorie* is completely absent, provides a typical example [Fig. 3.1].

How were the one hundred tales arranged within the work itself? The *Othea* reads as a somewhat disparate collection of glossed verses; and although the basis of the overall story is the Trojan War, the organisation of the material within can seem somewhat random. Although some grouping is apparent in the first forty-four tales, that grouping is not apparent from reading either the *texte* or the *glose*, but only from the content of the *allegories*. In these glosses, readers may deduce from the religious extrapolations effected that the material has been arranged according to certain religious categories: the four cardinal virtues thus become the 'theme' of stories I–IV; likewise the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit unite stories VI–XII; the three theological virtues (XIII–XV); the seven deadly sins (XVI–XXII); two lessons from the Credo (XXIII–XXIV); and finally, the Ten Commandments provide the theme for stories XXXV–XLIV. After this, although Hindman notes that stories LXXXVIII–XCVIII present the Trojan material more chronologically, the remaining tales are presented in a seemingly random order, without any interpretative theme providing unity.

Although it is therefore possible to categorise some of the stories to an extent, several factors suggest that any structure should not be overstated: not only does nothing in the presentation of the text alert readers to these groupings, which only emerge from reading the *allegories*, but the groupings also only include the first forty-four stories. That said, some manuscripts, including two prepared by Christine, do highlight the beginning of the Ten Commandments section. It therefore seems that Christine herself sought to make these particular allegorical readings slightly more prominent. In both fr. 606 and London, British Library, MS Harley 4431, the stories follow one another sequentially: story xxxv following in the same column immediately after the end of story xxxiv. In these two manuscripts, a miniature precedes the textual component of each story, and the *texte*, *glose*, and *allegorie* follow in that order. However, at the start of the paragraph directly following the rubric announcing the *allegorie* of story xxxv, a sentence introduces this and the nine subsequent allegorical readings: 'Or venons a declairier les commandemens de la loy, et y

prendrons alegorie a nostre propos' [Fig. 3.1].¹⁷ This is the only instance of such narrative signposting in this version of the *Othea*, and the introductory phrase is not especially made to stand out from the text (although a pilcrow is used to accentuate it slightly); instead, it is simply integrated into the body of the *allegorie*. However, certain other copies do render the prefatory phrase more prominently. This is the case in Cambridge, Newnham College, MS 5, in which the phrase is placed at the top of the third column, above the *allegorie* rubric [Fig. 3.3]. A further example is to be found in Cambridge, St. John's College, MS 5, a copy of Stephen Scrope's English translation, dating from around 1450–1455 [Fig. 3.4]. Here, a rubric separate from that of the *allegorie* elevates this short sentence to the status of an exordium by stating that this is the 'Prologue to the Allegorie'. Moreover, a gold illuminated champ initial makes this short passage stand out more distinctly on the page. Whilst this alteration of Christine's introductory statement may be no more than a scribal adaptation to a more recognisable format, this kind of change seems to indicate that some later scribes deemed the Ten Commandments section particularly important, and therefore adapted the presentation to draw the reader's eye towards it more directly than the author had done.

Having described the distinctive format and presentation of the *Othea*, I now focus on this section and the commandment stories for the remainder of this contribution.

Problematising the Ten Commandments

In each of the ten commandment stories, the lack of connection between the *texte* and *glose* and the commandment given in the *allegorie* is particularly significant, as it would seem to undermine the strength of the precepts themselves. The three parts of the story xxxvi provide a typical example. In this case, the *texte* and *glose* together exhort readers to protect their cousins and family in war, taking Memnon, cousin of Hector and Paris, as a point of reference:

Maymon, ton loial cousin
Qui a ton besoing t'est voisin

17 Transcription my own. 'Now we come to declare the Commandments of the Law, in which we find allegorical readings relating to our matter'.

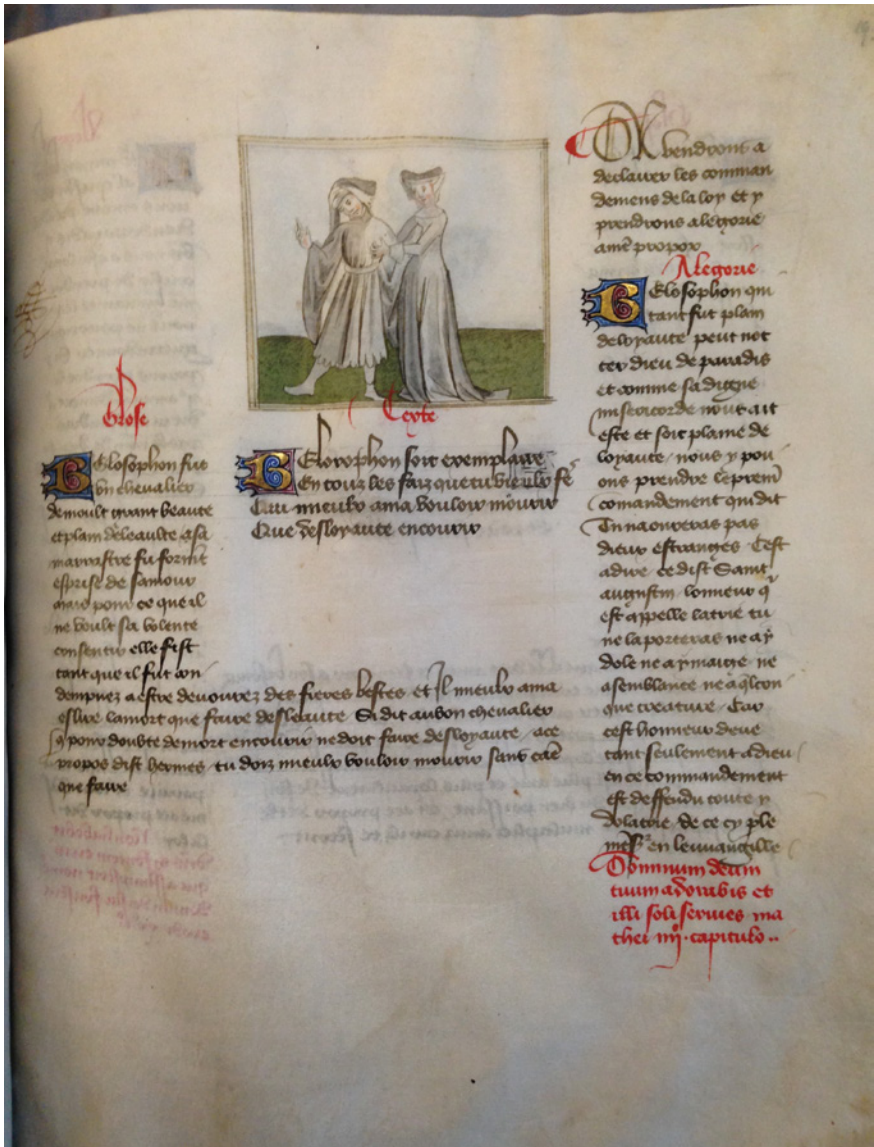


FIGURE 3.3 Start of the Ten Commandments section, Cambridge, Newnham College, MS 5, f. 19r.

REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE PRINCIPAL AND FELLOWS OF
 NEWNHAM COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

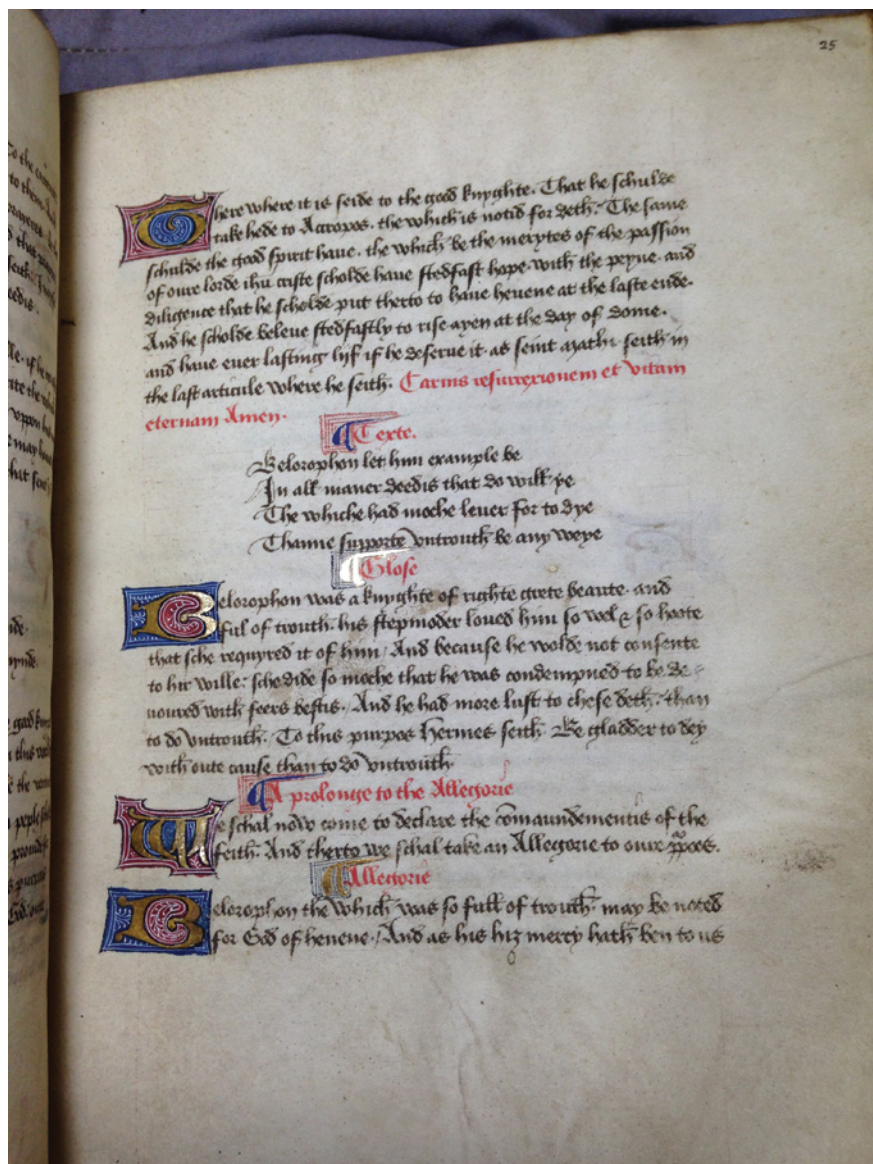


FIGURE 3.4 Start of the Ten Commandments section, Cambridge, St. John's College, MS 5, f. 25r.
REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE MASTER AND FELLOWS OF ST. JOHN'S
COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

Et tant t'aime, tu dois amer,
Et pour son besoing toi armer.¹⁸

The *allegorie* that follows reminds readers that God became their cousin when He became man: 'Maymon, le loyal cousin, pouons entendre Dieu de paradis, qui bien nous a esté loyal cousin de prendre nostre humanité'.¹⁹ There is nothing particularly surprising about this exegesis and the proposition that God should benefit from the same loyalty that readers ought to show their kin, but the second half of the *allegorie* does not seem logically to follow on from this, and the extrapolated meaning comes as a somewhat unexpected conclusion. It reads 'Si y pouons prendre le second commandement qui dit: "Tu ne prendras pas le nom de Dieu en vain"'.²⁰ If, as has been suggested, the quatrains function as some sort of mnemonic device for the rest of the lesson,²¹ in cases where the concluding commandment does not follow naturally, it is perhaps less likely that readers would have been able to recall it easily—although they may be able to do so by replaying the different interpretative steps through which Christine guides readers.

As usual, in each of the accompanying illuminations, the image depicts only the literal level of the legendary scenes referred to in the *texte* and *glose*. For example, the image accompanying story xxxvi is clearly a scene of battle [Fig. 3.5]: in the foreground, whilst Memnon avenges Hector's death by wounding Achilles, he is prevented from killing him, and Achilles' men come to his aid in the background. This illustrates the sort of situation that the reader's cousin might find themselves in, as described in the *glose*, but there is no attempt to visually integrate the religious content of the *allegorie*. The religious meaning is therefore not only unanticipated by the 'secular' part of the story, but is also not made visually apparent. Neither the most easily read nor easily recollected sections of the *Othea*—the images and the verses—refer to the religious context. But if the Ten Commandments are not operating in a conventional

18 *Othea* 250. 'Just as your loyal cousin Memnon loves you, and helps you when you need him to, you must love him, and arm yourself to help him when he needs you'.

19 *Othea* 251. 'By the loyal cousin Memnon, we might understand God in Heaven, who showed himself to be a loyal cousin when he took our human form'.

20 Ibid. 'By which we might understand the second commandment that says: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain"'.
21 Zimmerman M., "Christine de Pizan: Memory's Architekt", in Altmann B.K. – McGrady D.M. (eds.), *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook* (New York – London: 2003) 61. For Desmond and Sheingorn, it is the images that have 'mnemonic potential': *Myth, Montage and Visuality* 19.



FIGURE 3.5 *Epistre Othea* Master, King Memnon avenges Hector's death, Paris, BnF fr. MS 606, f. 18r.

REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION.

way, do they merely function as a pretext for gathering this material together? Since the lessons derived from the material are often unexpected, and sometimes even surprising, is there another purpose to this surprising grouping?

In order to answer these questions, cases in which the precepts of the Decalogue are shown to be problematic or ambiguous should be examined, as in for instance story XXXIX. Its *texte* reads:

Croy pour la santé de ton corps
D'Esculappion les rapports,
Et non pas de l'enchanterresse
Circés, qui trop est tromparresse.²²

Somewhat unexpectedly, this advice to follow doctors and physicians such as Aesculapius and not to trust Circe's enchantments and sorcerous deeds is extrapolated into the fifth commandment: 'You shall not kill'. This extrapolation is particularly surprising, as surely a more fitting spot for this commandment would have been story XLIV, which strongly advises the reader against following the example of tyrannical king Busiris who enjoyed slaying men for sport; instead, the commandment extrapolated from that story is the seventh: 'You shall not steal'. But it is the content of *allegorie* XXXIX that particularly demonstrates the problems of the precept, 'You shall not kill', for the prince or future leader who reads these commands. The *allegorie* explains that princes and ministers of justice may in fact occasionally *need* to put criminals to death, in order to protect the public good:

[...] et n'est pas si deffendue aux princes, aux juges et aux menistres de justice mettre a mort les malfaiteurs, mais tant seulement a ceulx qui n'en ont point d'auctorité, mais que en cas de neccessité, la ou un homme n'en pourroit autrement eschapper, ou quel cas les drois seuffrent bien tuer autruy, en son corps deffendant, autrement non.²³

Hindman has suggested that 'as an explication of the fifth commandment, this line of reasoning seems odd, since it concentrates on the punishment of

22 *Othea* 255. 'For the health of your body, believe in Esculapio's findings, not those of the fickle enchantress Circe'.

23 *Othea* 256. 'It is therefore not forbidden for princes, judges, and ministers of justice to put wrongdoers to death, but only those who have some authority in the matter, and only when absolutely necessary—for instance, [when a man's crimes are so great that] he cannot escape this punishment, in which case the laws do permit it so long as the accused defends his life, but not otherwise'.

evil-doers rather than on evil deeds themselves'.²⁴ She sees the contrast between Circe and Aesculapius as unusual, but considers contemporary factors connected with the treatment of Charles VI's madness—factors of the utmost concern to the *Othea*'s initial addressees—as motivating this unusual presentation.²⁵ The relevance of the commandment is also an issue in two further examples.

The first of these, story XXXVIII, summarises the tragedy of Piramus and Thisbe. The fourth commandment, 'Honour your father and your mother', is associated with this story. Without explicitly contradicting each other, the *glose* and *allegorie* respectively attribute the lovers' deaths to a different cause. In the *glose*: 'Et pour ce que par petite occasion [the wimple] avint si grant male aventure, dit au bon chevalier que a petite enseigne ne doit donner grant foy'.²⁶ It is therefore Thisbe's wimple and Piramus's misinterpretation of this sign which are seen to lead to the young couple's tragic death. Conversely, the *allegorie* blames Piramus for having gone against his parents' wishes in pursuit of his passion: 'De ce que il dit, que il ne cuide estre certain, pouons notter l'ignorance ou nous sommes soubz la correccion de pere et de mere'.²⁷ These two factors might go hand in hand: perhaps Piramus was too young to interpret signs such as the fallen wimple on his own, and his foolhardy youthfulness could thereby have caused his downfall. However, by depicting a lion devouring Thisbe's wimple [Fig. 3.6], the illumination represents the factor blamed in the *glose*, suggesting that *this* was the cause of the ensuing tragedy, and not the young couple's failure to obey their parents.

The conclusion to story XLII, which takes the story of Leander and Hero as its subject, is similarly surprising. The *glose* states that Leander (like Piramus) died because his love for a lady led him to commit foolhardy actions. This time, however, there is no misunderstanding: Leander swam to meet Hero in bad weather and drowned, leaving his distraught lover to plunge dramatically to her death upon hearing the tragic news. If the moral to the story of Piramus and Thisbe was to honour your father and mother, this injunction could also serve here. But this is not the case, nor is the sixth commandment, 'Do not

24 Hindman, *Painting and Politics* 117.

25 As Charles VI's madness worsened, accusations of poisoning abounded, and Louis d'Orléans was accused of practicing witchcraft on the king: Hindman, *Painting and Politics* 118.

26 *Othea* 254. 'And because such a small incident led to such a great disaster, it [the *texte*] tells the good knight that he should not give such great credence to poor evidence'.

27 *Othea* 255. 'Where the tale says that the good knight should not believe himself to be certain, we may think of our own ignorant position, under the correction of our father and mother'.



FIGURE 3.6 *Epistre Othea* Master, *Piramus and Thisbe*, Paris, BnF fr. MS 606, f. 18v.
REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION.

commit adultery', cited—this moral might have been fitting, even though the story does not imply that Hero and Leander were married. Instead, the *allegorie* surprisingly extrapolates the commandment, 'Do not bear false witness against your neighbour', from this exemplum. Again, there is no reference to this allegorical reading in the accompanying illumination, and this is surely the most unexpected of the conclusions drawn from the Ten Commandments.

In fact, if ten 'commandments' do emerge from reading the *texte*, *glose*, and the images on their own, these take the form of an alternative set of exhortations, more tailored to a prince-diplomat or lover, or to a member of one of the chivalric orders, to someone interested in political ideas and in government rather than in the pursuit of war: in other words, to the original addressee, Louis I, Duke of Orléans, founder of the Order of the Porcupine.²⁸ The alternative Ten Commandments implicit in the *gloses* of Christine's text, written with a reader such as Louis in mind, might be formulated as follows:

- Story xxxv: Better to die than be disloyal in battle
- xxxvi: Protect your (extended) family in battle
- xxxvii: Do not threaten your neighbour
- xxxviii: Give little credence to poor evidence
- xxxix: If possible, avoid witchcraft
- xl: Do not trust an enemy whom you have wronged
- xli: You may occasionally be obliged to kill, but do not do so wantonly or without cause
- xlII: Do not value your life above your love
- xlIII: Better peace than the foolhardy pursuit of a quarrel
- xlIV: Live a happy life

As such, these 'commandments' take on a practical, didactic quality—one that is seen in Christine's other texts concerned with kingship and chivalric behaviour, such as *Le Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage Roy Charles V* (c. 1404–1405) and *Le Livre des fais d'armes et de chevalerie* (c. 1410). These texts and the

28 On the secular orders, see: Hindman, *Painting and Politics* 43–51. These orders were formed to defend political claims, and differed from earlier forms of knighthood in that they were not concerned with soldiering or war. Louis de Bourbon had formed the Order of the Golden Shield in the previous century, which served as a model for the Order of the Porcupine, and which Hindman points out is visually alluded to in the presence of a golden shield in Harley 4431 and fr. 606. It is not known which of the other addressees of *Othea* manuscripts were also members of these kinds of orders. However, Philip the Good, another early dedicatee of the *Othea*, went on to found the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1430: Desmond – Sheingorn, *Myth, Montage, and Visuality* 85.

commandments alike offer specific advice on how to act in situations in which the intended readers may find themselves.

How might the incongruity in the pairing between story and commandment be explained? Is the mismatch between the two parts of the story deliberate, and if so, what purpose does it serve? I consider that this incongruity serves to underscore the *Othea*'s didactic function: because a single commandment could be a fitting moral to more than one story (such as the command 'Honour thy father and mother', which we are told applies to story XXXVIII, but could also apply to XLII), and because the precept does not always follow from the mythical story exposed in the *texte* and *glose* (such as the precept not to bear false witness), the *Othea* implies that these ten stories—and by extension, the Ten Commandments—should be taken as a whole. That the *Othea* aims to instruct whilst offering ten alternative commandments provokes the reader to reflect not just on the commandments themselves generally, but also on their applications in particular contexts. Readers will not fail to notice the contradictions in this section of the *Othea*, such as the command not to kill, coupled with the reflection that the addressee will *have* to kill from time to time. It is ultimately left up to them to interpret the commands of the Law as more or less absolute, with the help of the alternative commandments that the text offers. Although the reader-viewer is not directed to *not* follow the Ten Commandments, the stories advise noble readers on some of the more complicated matters they will face, including the inevitability of conflict—practical and diplomatic matters that the Ten Commandments do not adequately address. Rather than advising its readers to avoid conflict at all costs, the *Othea* teaches them to behave in an honourable and noble way during campaigns. The Decalogue offers advice for all men, commoners and nobility alike; Christine supplements these injunctions with advice for a prince: the future ruler.

As the visual programme that accompanies these texts was extended in Christine's own lifetime, the religious content becomes increasingly marginalised. This marginalisation continues to occur in copies and editions of the *Othea* prepared after Christine's lifetime, particularly in a reworking of the text by Jean Miélot. It is this altered version of the text which concludes my discussion.

A Scribal Recasting: Jean Miélot's Paratext

Jean Miélot's reworking of the *Othea* not only features alterations to its presentation and iconographic programme, but Miélot also took it upon himself to expand upon and explain the mythological background in the *gloses*. This is particularly evident in the paratext of this reworking, of which two copies from

the second half of the fifteenth century survive. Although the two manuscripts are not identical in their presentation, as both contain the same revised text, I focus here on one manuscript: Aylesbury, Waddesdon Manor MS 8, which dates to c. 1455.²⁹

In this copy, the layout has been changed significantly, with one complete story—made up of *texte*, *glose*, *allegorie*, and image—featuring in full on each recto or verso. The Aylesbury manuscript is not the first to feature this new layout, which is also seen in the fully illuminated copy at Newnham College, which dates to the 1430s [Fig. 3.3]. However, in the Aylesbury manuscript, Miélot seems especially concerned with space: each complete story is expanded only as much as needed for the written space on each page to be filled with text. Figure 3.7, showing the seventh commandment, is a typical example of this manuscript's layout. What is intriguing here is the way Miélot has altered the presentation of the text so that, as Rosalind Brown-Grant has argued, a hierarchy between the different elements of the story now seems to be firmly in place.³⁰ In this new layout, the *texte* is written in much larger script than the *glose* and is centred on the page beneath the image, introduced by a larger illuminated initial. The *texte* and image are also aligned with one another, suggesting that they are to be read together. The *glose* appears in a smaller font directly beneath the *texte*. A hierarchy is thereby created between these different elements of the story, in which the *allegorie* is of least importance: in each story, it has been placed in the small right hand column, almost in the margin, in a space so narrow that there is not even enough space for the rubric 'Allegorie' to be written horizontally, such that it has nearly always had to be written vertically [Fig. 3.7].³¹ In certain cases, either where Miélot's expansion has taken up too much space on the page, or where the original *glose* was longer than usual, the *allegorie* has been marginalised even further by being written in a smaller font. An example of this is seen in the layout of the Piramus and Thisbe episode, the fourth of the Ten Commandment stories [Fig. 3.8]. It is possible that this layout was chosen in order to reflect that of bible commentaries and exegesis. However, it still seems peculiar that the *glose* is made so much more prominent than the *allegorie*, particularly as Christine's 'original'

29 The second copy of Miélot's reworking is to be found in Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 9392—dating circa 1460. This manuscript's miniatures are reproduced in Van den Gheyn J. (ed.), *Christine de Pizan: Epître d'Othéa, déesse de la prudence, à Hector, chef des Troyens; Reproduction des 100 miniatures du manuscrit 9392 de Jean Miélot* (Brussels: 1913).

30 Brown-Grant R., "Illumination as Reception. Jean Miélot's Reworking of the Epistre Othea", in Zimmerman M. – Rentiis D. de (eds.), *The City of Scholars. New Approaches to Christine de Pizan* (Berlin – New York: 1994) 260–271.

31 Figure 3.8 is an exception.



FIGURE 3.7 Loyset Liédet, King Busiris, Aylesbury, Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (The National Trust), MS 8, f. 24v.

REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION.



FIGURE 3.8 Loyset Liédet, *Pyramus and Thisbe*, Aylesbury, Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (The National Trust), MS 8, f. 237.

REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION.

format—that seen in BnF fr. 848—also, more forthrightly, imitates the exegetical model without creating any hierarchy between the different elements of each story, as Miélot does here.

If the *allegorie* is rendered less prominent, the opposite is certainly true of the *glose*, which not only retains its central position, but is also expanded by Miélot—sometimes quite extensively. Miélot's expansions take the form of amplifications and clarifications of the mythological material referred to in Christine's text, which he took it upon himself to effect. At times, he anticipates details from the Trojan myths that occur out of chronological order, and at other times he explains the surrounding legendary context further. Miélot takes care to make his additions visible to his reader, as each of his expansions is introduced by the rubric 'de ce meismes'³² and a small champ initial [Fig. 3.7]. Indeed, the vocabulary used in Miélot's adaptation of the *gloses* focuses on clarifying their meaning: the phrases 'ce qui signifie', 'c'est a dire', and the variation 'vault autant a dire' punctuate his additions almost to the point of exaggeration³³ and are not just used to expound the Trojan myth, but also to explain and to translate the Latin citations that often conclude the *allegories*.

A final, notable change in Miélot's reworking is that the incipit to the Ten Commandments, which, as was seen earlier, certain scribes made more prominent, disappears completely in this version. Instead of offering any kind of preamble to signal the beginning of the Ten Commandments section of the text, *allegorie xxxv* simply begins with the *glose* proper. Indeed, Miélot's chosen format, in which each story has a full page to itself, suggests a very different readerly approach to this text: unlike the contemplative reading encouraged by the earliest layout, or the sequential reading invited by fr. 606, here the layout encourages a purely mythological reading, one in which the Trojan story itself is central.³⁴ The somewhat tenuous religious readings and the sketchy links between each of the Ten Commandments and the *texte* seem less problematic in Miélot's versions, as the *Othea* is presented as a work concerned primarily with the Trojan myths, its religious elements downplayed and rendered less prominent, as is evident in the removal of the textual signpost that marks the beginning of the ten commandment stories, which are no longer pre-

32 'Of the same'. Transcriptions of Miélot's text are my own, and are all taken from the Waddesdon manuscript.

33 'This signifies', 'this means', and 'this means the same as'.

34 Deborah McGrady sees the change in format from glossed to sequential as facilitating an oral reading: McGrady D., "Reading for Authority: Portraits of Christine de Pizan and Her Readers", in Partridge S. – Kwakkel E. (eds.), *Author, Reader, Book: Medieval Authorship in Theory and Practice* (Toronto – London: 2012) 169.

sented as a whole. Furthermore, the *allegories* (the only parts of the stories that contain any reference to the commandments) are marginalised in the layout of the text. Not wanting to eliminate them entirely, Miélot modified the paratextual apparatus and placed them in a narrow column, that stands almost in the margin and that is difficult to read, especially on the verso. By lessening the link between the three textual elements and consigning one of them to the margins, the incongruities between the mythical content and religious teaching are less evident. The focus of the reworked *Othea* is now firmly on the mythological context, with the emphasis in the Ten Commandments section lying on Miélot's expansions of the Trojan legends, not on the alternative commandments. Whilst a link to religious texts may be possible, it is clearly only marginally so.

Five years later, when he recopied the *Othea*—whether from the Aylesbury manuscript, from his original source, or from another manuscript entirely—though he retained the additions to Christine's text, Miélot did not maintain the same presentation. In the Brussels manuscript, each story now begins on a recto and ends at the bottom of the following verso; this results in each story taking up twice the amount of space allocated in the earlier manuscript. Such a change might have been made because the layout of the Aylesbury manuscript was found to be too cramped. Another possibility lies in the ownership of the manuscript: the Aylesbury manuscript was first owned by, though not necessarily commissioned by, Louis de Luxembourg, whereas the later manuscript was produced for Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, who was known for his taste for sumptuous manuscripts and for crafting his identity around the Trojan legends.³⁵ Perhaps more money was therefore available for the production of this manuscript, making it possible to double the number of folios in the copy prepared for the king's brother.

Conclusion

By tracing the absence or presence of the 'prologue' to stories XXXV–XLIV of the *Othea* into early printed editions, two traditions may be distinguished: one that continued to reproduce the 'prologue' (such as Robert Wyer's English translation of circa 1540, which possibly took the St. John's College manuscript

35 On this theme, see: "Constructing Masculinities" in Desmond – Sheingorn, *Myth, Montage, and Visuality* 85–97.

as its base edition),³⁶ and one that no longer featured it (including Pierre Pigouchet's French edition of circa 1500). The author's highlighting the start of the Ten Commandments section and the prominence granted to it in the St. John's College Cambridge manuscript imply that it was deemed relevant to readers and worthy of attracting their attention. However, it can be a guessing game for the reader to work out which of the commandments will be unveiled as an *allegorie* or religious interpretation of the Trojan material encountered in the *texte* and *glose*, and the revelation can sometimes come as a surprise. Although this may seem puzzling, it might in fact have been the intended effect. This collection of ten tales could have been deliberately composed in this manner, so as to prompt the reader to reflect more widely on relevant ethical and political issues. The reader is thereby encouraged to meditate on these ten stories—and collaterally on the Ten Commandments—as a whole, rather than asked to consider each injunction in isolation. Certain illuminations can serve to crystallise interpretative problems faced by the reader, and in such cases they serve as visual aids to the conundrum presented by the *glose* and *allegorie*. For example, as readers look at the bloodied figures of Piramus and Thisbe, the question of how they got there is not straightforward: was it because of Thisbe's wimple? Or did they disobey the fourth commandment? The question of *how* to interpret is central to the *Othea*, and here readers are redirected towards precisely this question, both in the story itself and in the image. By problematising the commandment, Christine could be seen as problematising—or even parodying—the process of hermeneutical interpretation.

The final story of the Ten Commandments sequence displays a certain awareness of the incongruity of some of these allegorical extrapolations. Story XLIV exhorts readers not to be like Aurora, who cries over the death of her son every morning, and instead, to refrain from crying over worldly possessions. The *allegorie* understands this as the tenth commandment, 'You shall not covet your neighbour's goods'. However, the phrasing of this *allegorie* suggests that Christine was aware that she was covering old ground here: not only are links made with the seventh commandment, 'You shall not steal', but readers are also explicitly reminded that this commandment has already been covered above: 'Par quoy, ce dit saint Augustin, est deffendue le volenté de faire larrecin ou rapine; dont le fait est

36 On this edition, see: Coldiron A.E.B., *English Printing, Verse Translation, and the Battle of the Sexes, 1476–1557* (Farnham: 2009) 21–68.

deffendu devant par le .vij. e commandement'.³⁷ By referring back in the text ('devant'), this statement has the effect of closing the Decalogue section. At this point, any further injunctions will inevitably incur repetition, and it is clear that one commandment might fit in more than one place. If the intended effect were to emphasise these connections, the original layout of the text, that encouraged a more contemplative reading, would have better showcased this aspect of the work.

Although the extrapolations from *texte* to commandment are far from straightforward, ultimately, it is up to the reader to assess these precepts, and to choose how to behave. Whilst some precepts, such as 'You shall not kill', are shown to be problematic for a king or ruler, others, such as the indictment not to steal, to which Christine adds the commandment 'You shall not rape', are shown to be universal.

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Loving Neighbour Before God: The First Commandment in Early Modern Lyric Poetry

Gregory P. Haake

In his extensive introduction to the collection of French love poetry entitled *Délie, Object de plus haulte vertu* (1544) by the sixteenth century Lyonnais poet Maurice Scève, the critic Gérard Defaux describes the poet as an unapologetic idolater in the most unapologetic of terms: ‘Scève, disons plutôt l’Amant qu’il met en scène et qu’il fait parler, a indiscutablement été, dans l’histoire de notre poésie, le premier—et le seul—poète de la Renaissance à s’être bel et bien damné, volontairement damné, damné en toute connaissance de cause, pour une femme’ (‘Scève, or rather the Lover whom he has created and whom he has made speak, has been without question, in the history of our poetry, the first—and the only—poet of the Renaissance to have well and truly damned himself, voluntarily damned himself, damned himself while being fully aware of the cause, for a woman’).¹ Upon reading this damning characterization of the poet’s motivations, one may find it difficult to believe that any self-respecting lyric poet in sixteenth-century France, much less one in the tradition of the great Francis Petrarch, would so willingly and so unabashedly transgress the first commandment for any reason, much less for love of a woman.² And yet, collections of love poetry—or *canzonieri*, as they were commonly called—often featured the image of the idol; surprisingly, there is nothing unusual about this. After all, is there a better way to convey the immensity of the beloved’s beauty,

1 Defaux G., “Introduction”, in Scève Maurice, *Délie, Object de plus haulte vertu*, 2 vols., ed. G. Defaux (Geneva: 2004) lxxxvii (my translation).

2 It is important to clarify that, while different traditions divide the Decalogue differently, Catholic tradition has consistently included the entirety of *Exodus* 20:2–6 as the first commandment. For a discussion of numbering and division up until the Reformation, see: Smith L.J., *The Ten Commandments: Interpreting the Bible in the Medieval World* (Leiden: 2014); for the early modern period, see: Thum V., “The Decalogue in Late Medieval and Early Modern Imagery: Catechetical Purpose and Theological Implications”, in Markl, D. (ed.), *The Decalogue and its Cultural Influence* (Sheffield: 2013) 268–269; and throughout the Christian tradition, see: Himbaza I., *Le Décalogue et l’histoire du texte* (Fribourg – Göttingen: 2004) 108–115. In addition, Defaux also assumes the traditional Catholic numbering and offers a discussion of the theme of idolatry among Scève and his contemporaries (“Introduction” lxii–ci).

or the thrill and the anguish of loving an unattainable woman from afar? Could it really have been a poet's intention to lose his soul for a love that would most certainly remain unrequited?³ Could the pain really have been that sweet that a poet would choose to doom himself for all eternity, for the sake of worshiping at the altar of a woman who will never love him back?

In response to these questions, I would like to explore how far poets were willing to go in their admiration and adoration of the beloved, and examine some of their potential motivations for doing so. In the first part of this article, I propose three poets for consideration. The first, the most famous and a model for the other two, is Francis Petrarch (1304–1374), whose object of devotion is the famous Laura, a woman whose name evokes that most coveted of poetic prizes, the laurel. The second, Maurice Scève (1501–1564?), with whom we are already acquainted, had as his object of affection *Délie*, a name that evokes the moon and the goddess and huntress Diana.⁴ The third is Pierre de Ronsard (1524–1585), who had multiple loves and is a much better known poet in the French context. He was a member of the poetic guild the *Pléiade*, and possessed a commitment to writing poetry that went well beyond this particular genre. All three present different but interesting cases of the poet who flirts with—or possibly even succumbs to—the temptation of transgressing the first commandment. In the second part of this contribution, I would like to go beyond a mere exposition of those respective struggles by proposing some possible explanations as to why an act that imperils the soul enticed these three poets (among others). More precisely, did the genre simply demand it, or did some more profound phenomenon in the late medieval and early modern period create the conditions under which loving one's neighbour before God promised a more tangible and satisfying option to fulfil human desire?

In Petrarch's *Rime sparse*, or 'scattered rhymes', as his *canzoniere* is called, it is important to distinguish between the poet and Petrarch himself. In fact, this gives us our first clue as to how to interpret the image of the idol in the poetry that seeks to immortalize the beloved Laura. If the collection at some

3 Lyric love poetry possessed many formulaic commonalities, among them a poet-lover who suddenly falls in love with a woman who, for one reason or another, is unattainable. The love, therefore, remains unrequited, and often allows the poet to depict her as a cruel mistress of his heart. See Mathieu-Castellani G., *Les thèmes amoureux dans la poésie française 1570–1600* (Paris: 1975) 14–17; Alduy C., *Politique des 'Amours': Poétique et genèse d'un genre français nouveau (1544–1560)* (Geneva: 2007) (the latter is a comprehensive work on the development of love poetry as a genre); Charpentier F., "Préface", in Scève Maurice, *Délie: Objet de plus haute vertu*, ed. idem (Paris: 1984) 10–15.

4 The poet engages the issue directly in *Délie* D22. See also: Coleman D., "Scève's Choice of the Name *Délie*", *French Studies* 18 (1964) 1–16.

level reflects actual history, it often seems incidental, especially since the figure of Laura remains so obscure throughout the text. As Robert Durling notes in the introduction to his English translation of the *Rime*: 'Laura is not the central focus of the poetry. Her psychology remains transcendent, mysterious (perhaps even miraculous, but that is evaded), the subject of conjecture and bewilderment except at moments represented as virtually total spiritual communion. Rather it is the psychology of the lover that is the central theme of the book'.⁵ It is precisely for this reason that the beloved as idol entices the poet. It allows him to bring her closer in the form of a graven image. Since the love will remain unrequited, she will always remain at a distance, mysterious, and God-like in her elusiveness and silence, not only to the poet but also to the reader. Moreover, since we never see her faults, but only her torturous beauty, she stands as a figure whose perfection further removes the poet from her world; she demands from the poet something more than love, namely, worship that simultaneously expresses and reinforces the chasm between the two while providing the poet an opportunity to place himself reverentially in her virtual presence.

Thus, can it really be said to be idolatry, or simply an expression of how the poet perceives his beloved and his relationship to her? In *Rime sparse* (RS) 30, the poet describes his extreme devotion to the lady, which manifests itself in his desire to follow her all the days of his life. The language of wandering from shore to shore and in every season permeates the narrative. At one point the poet writes:

I' temo di cangiar pria volto et chiome	I fear I shall change my face and my locks
che con vera pietà mi mostri gli occhi	before she with true pity will show me her eyes
l'idolo mio scolpito in vivo lauro;	my idol carved in living laurel;
ché s' al contar non erro oggi à sett' anni	for, if I do not err, today it is seven years
che sospirando vo di riva in riva	that I go sighing from shore to shore
la notte e 'l giorno, al caldo ed a la neve. ⁶	night and day, in heat and in snow.

In the context of this poem he accentuates not only the lady's beauty but also, potentially, her divinity—for he writes at the end of RS 30, 'L'auro e i topacii al

5 Durling R. (trans. – ed.), *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The Rime sparse and Other Lyrics* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1976) 7.

6 RS 30, vv. 25–30. All citations and translations are from Durling.

sol sopra la neve / vincon le bionde chiome presso a gli occhi / che menan gli anni miei sì tosto a riva' ('Gold and topaz in the sun above the snow are vanquished by the golden locks next to those eyes that lead my years so quickly to shore').⁷ According to Durling, the mention of gold and topaz refers to *Psalm* 119 (118) in the Vulgate.⁸ Presumably, the poet places Laura above these precious elements, equating her with God's law in the psalm. The combination of the poet's use of the word *idolo* and this final turn in the closing tercet creates a divine presence amid the poet's wanderings, one that rivals or even surpasses God's. In *RS* 228, the veneration turns to adoration as well, when the poet speaks of a laurel that Love has planted in his heart: 'Tal la mi trovo al petto ove ch' i' sia, / felice incarco; et con preghiere oneste / l'adoro e 'nchino come cosa santa' ('Such do I find it in my breast, wherever I may be, a happy burden with chaste prayers I adore it and bow to it as to a holy thing').⁹ The poet bows in front of the laurel in what is clearly an idolatrous gesture. At this point, it certainly looks like he might be raising his beloved—and the verses that he offers her—a little too high.

Lest we begin to judge this poor poet who is so lost in his devotion, we must first situate *RS* 228, as well as the many others that employ seemingly idolatrous language, in the context of the entire collection of poetry. The poet displays a real struggle, not only with his love but also with questions of faith. Nevertheless, an analysis of these verses should distinguish between the poetic and the theological. With the former, the poetry really seems like a 'giovenile errore' ('youthful error') in the etymological sense of being juvenile wanderings.¹⁰ In other words, it is more important where the poet ends up. In the final poem *RS* 366, known by its first line 'Vergine bella che di sol vestita' ('Beautiful virgin who clothed with the sun'), the poet gives a general indication of where this endpoint lies, namely in a transformation of his idolatrous verses into a type of litany to the Virgin Mary, that begs her to intercede and to 'be [his] guide and to direct [his] twisted path to a good end'.¹¹ Capped by the poet's final cry, the collection unites the poetic with the theological, as it comes to look more like a pilgrimage upon which the poet has embarked in

7 *RS* 30, vv. 37–39.

8 *Psalm* 119(118):127 in Latin ('I have loved thy commandments above gold and topaz').

9 *RS* 228, vv. 12–14.

10 Petrarch introduces his *canzoniere* by writing in *RS* 1: 'Voi ch' ascoltate in rime sparse il suono / di quei sospiri ond' io nudriva 'l core / in sul mio primo giovenile errore' ('You who hear in scattered rhymes the sound of those sighs with which I nourished my heart during my first youthful error'), vv. 1–3.

11 *RS* 366, vv. 64–65. '[P]rego che sia mia scorta, / et la mia torta via drizzi a buon fine'.

hope of redeeming a vain and perhaps idolatrous love. The idolatry is at worst temporary, an intense expression of the consequences of the poet's love for Laura. This excessive adoration and fascination could, in the words of cultural historian Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle's clever assessment, reflect a struggle with the sixth commandment and not so much the first.¹² This suggestion seems right as an explanation of the collection's poetic and theological themes, since an argument could be made that lustful obsession quite often resembles adoration superficially, but not necessarily qualitatively.

Maurice Scève, even though he includes his share of lustful thoughts, presents an interesting contrast to Petrarch. Taking into account the depth of feeling that emerges in his poetry, coupled with the imagery he uses, one could probably launch a strong accusation based on both the sixth and the first commandments. A great deal of scholarship sees the work of Scève not just as a Petrarchan imitation, but also as a 'correction' of Petrarch's 'juvenile errors' with errors of its own.¹³ Of all the lyric love poets in the Petrarchan tradition, Scève simultaneously mirrors Petrarch's narrative both the most and the least. Scève was a minor cleric from Lyon who had previously written about his discovery of Laura's tomb at Avignon in 1533, where Petrarch had supposedly encountered her. This gives him a special connection to his model, but one against which he defines himself. Very little else is known about him, but his collection of poetry, entitled in French *Délie, Object de plus haute vertu* (*Delie, Object of the highest virtue*), was known for its tightly packed but extremely rich ten by ten poems—that is, ten lines with ten syllables each. In the very first poem, the poet evokes Petrarch by citing his own 'jeunes erreurs' ('youthful errors'), but another image more pertinent to our purposes appears as well. In the last two verses, the poet describes himself as a 'Piteuse hostie au conspect de toy, Dame, / Constituée Idole de ma vie' ('Pitiful victim, I, now faced with you, / Lady, appointed Idol of my life').¹⁴ The opposition of the poet as the 'pitiful victim' in the presence of the lady who is the idol of his life, announces a poetic project that may be considerably less virtuous than Petrarch's simple

12 Boyle M.O., *Petrarch's Genius: Pentimento and Prophecy* (Berkeley: 1991) 4. Boyle is employing here the Catholic numbering and division of the Decalogue. Thus, the sixth commandment reads 'Thou shalt not commit adultery'.

13 See DellaNeva J., *Song and Counter-Song* (Lexington, Ky.: 1983), especially the discussion of 'jeunes erreurs' on pp. 94–96; and also Cave T., "Correcting Petrarch's Errors", in Nash J.C. (ed.), *Pre-Pléiade Poetry* (Lexington, Ky.: 1985) 112–124.

14 *Délie* (D) 1, vv. 9–10. All citations from the *Délie* are taken from Scève, *Délie*. Translations are from Sieburth R. (ed. – trans.), *Emblems of Desire: Selections from the Délie of Maurice Scève* (Philadelphia: 2003).

wanderings. The 'hostie', of course, evokes Christ as victim in the Eucharist, and while it certainly reflects the poet's view of himself, as we will see, it also elevates the lady as idol above a central and very potent image of Christ.

The poet as idolater emerges in other places in the collection, but the particular image that incites Defaux to proclaim Scève as voluntarily damned is the one in which the poet compares himself to Prometheus. The invocation of the famous titan signals an immediate connection to the pitiful and Christological victim of the first poem, for in *Délie* (D) 77 the poet portrays himself as Prometheus, tied to the rock and tortured for having defied the gods. This particular poem is worth examination *in toto*, for it emphasizes the true nature of the poet's transgression and its consequences, while also hinting at his motivation:

Au Caucasus de mon souffrir lyé	To the Caucasus of my suffering chained
Dedans l'Enfer de ma peine eternelle,	Within the Hell of my endless distress,
Ce grand desir de mon bien oblyé,	This deep desire for my discounted aims,
Comme l'Aultour de ma mort	Now the Author of my undying death,
immortelle,	
Ronge l'esprit par une fureur telle,	Gnaws at my mind with such vehemence
Que consommé d'un si ardent	That, consumed by this fiery pursuit,
poursuyvre,	
Espoir le fait, non pour mon bien,	Hope revives it, yet not for my own good:
revivre:	
Mais pour au mal renaistre	Thus forever reborn to misery,
incessamment,	
Affin qu'en moy ce mien malheureux	My wretched life, without so wanting to,
vivre	
Prometheus tourmente	Tortures this Prometheus within me.
innocemment. ¹⁵	

This central poem in the collection concretizes several aspects of the poet's experience. He is Prometheus; he has defied the gods. And while the precise manner in which Prometheus did that is peripheral, the defiance is not. Neither is the fact that he is being punished for it. The experience of his love for the woman torments him. She is simultaneously the cause of and punishment for his decision to compete with the gods, to seize his own authority as Prometheus did in giving fire to humanity. Surprisingly, though, the poet is not that interested in escaping his torture. The poem is scattered with verbs and

15 Scève, D77.

adverbs of repetition, a repetition that the invocation of the Promethean myth suggests is endless, hinging on what would otherwise be a virtue, namely, hope. It is the hope—and likely a false one, which is what makes it so torturous—that perhaps one day the lady will return his love, even though he knows she never actually will, that makes his pain constant. In the context of this poem, the poet deliberately chooses to chain himself to the rock in the Caucasus, to continually experience the punishment for his sin of idolatry—but in truth, he simply chains himself so that his idolatry may be prolonged. For him, it is worth it.

In the final poem D449, Scève—unlike Petrarch—persists to the very end in this defiance. The flame of love will last, and the poet sees no difference between love's ardour and the virtue that follows as the poet and the beloved ascend beyond the sky into eternity: 'Aussi je voy bien peu de difference / Entre l'ardeur, qui noz cœurs poursuyvra, / Et la vertu, qui vive nous suyva / Oultre le ciel amplement long, & large. / Nostre Genevre ainsi doncques vivra / Non offensé d'aucun mortel Letharge' ('Thus I see little that might set apart / The ardor which will pursue our hearts / From the living virtue which will guide us / Beyond Heaven's infinite parts. / Our Juniper shall thus live on, / Unspoiled by death's Oblivion').¹⁶ Several commentators insist that the closing invocation of the Juniper brings the poem, and therefore the collection, around to a redemptive turn. Others maintain that Scève is simply acknowledging the eternal nature of the love he feels: this love, as spiritual as it may be, ultimately competes with a virtuous and holy one.¹⁷ The poet commits to his idolatry in order to remain in an eternal but illicit embrace.

Pierre de Ronsard, in his own version of the Petrarchan *canzoniere*, likewise uses the language of idols and idolatry, but in a way that expresses ambivalence toward the object of his worshipful affection. In the *Amours* of 1552 and 1553, that object is Cassandra, and the poet makes use of the familiar Petrarchan language of idolatry. In sonnet XII, he writes, 'Tout je desire, et si n'ay qu'une envie. / Un Promethée en passions je suis: / J'ose, je veux, je m'efforce, et ne puis, / Tant d'un fil noir la Parque ourdit ma vie' ('I desire all, and I also have but one want. / A suffering Prometheus am I: / I dare, I want, I force myself,

16 Ibid., D449, vv. 5–10.

17 For the former view, see: Skenazi C., *Maurice Scève et la pensée chrétienne* (Geneva: 1992); and Donaldson-Evans L., "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling": Biblical Intertextualities in Scève's *Délie*, *French Forum* 14, 1 (1989) 515. For the latter view, see: Defaux, note 9 on D449, 487. Defaux opposes Skenazi and Donaldson-Evans in the strongest of terms (487–488).

and cannot, / Since the Parca weaves into my life a black thread').¹⁸ The poet continues to use this imagery in sonnet XIII, where he describes the sweet cruelty of being fixed and nailed to the rock of the lady's 'rigor' and resolve against him.¹⁹ The actual word 'idol' appears in sonnet XXX: 'Tu [Raphaël] fais nager l'idole de ma Dame' ('You [Raphaël] establish the idol of my lady').²⁰ Here, the poet speaks to the archangel Raphaël who has created this idol before his very eyes.

In examining the echoes of idolatrous language in Petrarch and Scève, one can determine that the poet's sincere acknowledgment of his transgression seems to be lacking. The attempts to rationalize Scève's use of the word idol, by focusing on its synonymous relationship with the words 'form' or 'image', may perhaps be applied more justifiably to Ronsard's work.²¹ The poet in the *Amours* seems to refrain from setting himself idolatrously before an image that calls him to worship. Nevertheless, in sonnets CXXXI and CCXXV, the poet definitely employs images of sacrifice in ways that diverge from an orthodox approach to idolatry. These two sonnets resemble one another at first glance, but upon closer reading an important distinction emerges, which indicates wherein Ronsard's idolatry truly lies. In CXXXI, the poet construes his beloved as the goddess Venus, before whom lovers are potentially seen to immolate themselves in a temple of the poet's creation. In CCXXV, the poet makes his most explicitly idolatrous statement yet—or does he? He writes: 'Et pour garder que plus je n'y retombe, / Je veux tuer aux Dieux une Hecatombe' ('And to keep from falling once again in[to Love], / I would slay a hundred head of oxen in offering to the gods').²² In fact, he makes this sacrifice at a temple dedicated to freedom, a temporary freedom from his love for the lady whom he imagines to himself, and in whose 'nets' desire has entrapped him. He wishes to hang a painting in this temple to his freedom as a warning to other lovers, so that they might not suffer the same fate. These two sonnets paint the picture of a deeply conflicted poet. The idolatrous language in the sonnets is mutually opposed, since one is directed at the lady and the other at liberation from

18 All of Ronsard's texts are from *Œuvres complètes*, 2 vols., eds. J. Céard – D. Ménéger – M. Simonin (Paris: 1993) Sonnet XII, vv. 11–14 (translations of Ronsard are my own).

19 'Fiché cloué dessus ta rigueur dure, / Le plus cruel me seroit le plus doux' ('Planted, nailed upon your hardened rigor, / The cruelest would be to me the sweetest').

20 Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes* XXX, v. 8.

21 Cynthia Skenazi argues that Scève's use of the word idol in D1 is benign. According to her, it is nothing more than a synonym for 'form', in that the lady takes form before the poet's eyes (see: Skenazi, *Maurice Scève et la pensée chrétienne* 28).

22 Ronsard, *Œuvres* CCXXV, vv. 12–13.

the lady. What exactly is the poet choosing to worship, we might ask? In both cases, the temple, the altar and the warning to other lovers are self-evidently devices of the poet's construction, and their status as such gives the reader a clue as to where the poet's transgression may lie.

Since the word 'idol' itself tends to be used less provocatively in Ronsard's poetry, one must look deeper for an idolatry that lurks in more unexpected places. The object of the poet's worship becomes clear if one takes into account the two sonnets with their conflicting language about temples of worship and other sonnets—XCIII and CXV, for example, where the poet evokes the image of the idol again, all the while insisting that his words and verses have the power to break the hardest of rocks.²³ The poet keeps returning to the power of his own words when using idolatrous language. This unveils a transgression that in Ronsard's case is quite unlike either Petrarch's or Scève's. His own language both reveals his sin and is his sin. In sonnet XX, the poet articulates the nature of his idolatry as he uses an easily recognizable series of images but orients them in a strange way:

Je voudroy bien richement jaunissant En pluye d'or goutte à goutte descendre Dans le giron de ma belle Cassandre, Lors qu'en ses yeulx le somne va glissant.	I would like to descend richly yellowing In a shower of gold, drop by drop Into the lap of my beautiful Cassandra, As slumber comes sliding into her eye
Je voudroy en toreau blanchissant Me transformer pour sur mon dos la prendre, Quand en Avril par l'herbe la plus tendre	I wish to transform myself Into a white bull to take her on my back, When in April by the tender grass
Elle va fleur mille fleurs ravissant :	She, a flower, goes ravishing a thousand flowers:
Je voudroy bien pour allegier ma peine Estre un Narcisse et elle une fontaine Pour m'y plonger une nuit à sejour :	I would like, to ease my pain, To be a Narcissus and she a fountain That I might plunge myself into it all night:
Et si voudroy que ceste nuit encore	And I would like that this night might

23 Mathieu-Castellani, while situating Ronsard firmly within the Petrarchist and Neo-Platonic tradition, hints that what he takes from these traditions are images and myths that emphasize poetic creation. See: Mathieu-Castellani, *Les thèmes amoureux* (Paris: 1975) 31.

Fust éternelle, et que jamais l'Aurore Yet be eternal, and that never Dawn
 Pour m'esveiller ne rallumast le jour.²⁴ Awaken me by lightening the day.

The poet wishes to become like the god Zeus, to seize his beloved Cassandra for himself, or better yet, to become like Narcissus plunging his gaze into the reflective waters of Cassandra. According to this myth, the water is more or less inconsequential, for Narcissus, rather than casting his eyes upon the pool, locks his gaze upon the image of himself he sees reflected there. If the lady is the water, she is nothing more than an instrument of the poet's self-regard, a bystander peripheral to this decidedly masturbatory scenario. The poet's own image is at the centre of the scene of adoration. The use of idolatrous language in the *Amours*, therefore, is in my view nothing more than a distraction; the poet's verses are the object of his own fascination and desire, for as he insists in a supplementary ode to Cassandra, inserted into the 1553 version of his collection, her beauty and youth may fade like a wilting flower, but his verses will certainly endure.²⁵

Having described the phenomenon of transgression against the first commandment in the lyric love poetry of these three poets, I would now like to propose some reasons why they found it so tempting to insert the imagery of idolatry into their verse. I see three possible explanations, which I shall evaluate in the order of their severity as violations of the first commandment. At the lowest level would be idolatry used descriptively, whereby the poet employs the image of idolatry to describe the intensity of his feeling toward the woman, and nothing more. In other words, her beauty is so great and overpowers him to such an extent that it cannot help but elicit divinity and therefore adoration. I would even contend that very often the language of idolatry and worship constitutes a kind of hyperbole at this level. The beauty of the lady and the poet's feelings toward her approach an extreme, and the language of worship and adoration acts as a superlative to reflect this extremity. In Scève's case, for example, one gets the impression that the poet's desire overwhelms him to such a point that it seems like an irresistible, otherworldly power. While I warned earlier against assimilating the poet in the poem to the poem's author, the use of idolatrous language leads the reader to suspect that the passion at issue is nothing other than the man Scève's real sentiment, and that the poetic exercise represents an outlet that permits him to save himself from this passion. Thus, in describing its intensity and in choosing to relive it, the poetry sounds like idol worship and seems to threaten voluntary damnation, but proves upon

24 Ronsard, *Œuvres* xx.

25 Ronsard, "A sa maistresse", *Œuvres* xvii, v.1.

closer inspection to be nothing more than the precise representation of how the poet feels. The repetition for which he hopes could refer to repeated readings by the reader to whom Scève's collection is addressed—and especially to those by the poet himself, readings that force him to relive the experience of his passion over and over again. Thus, the poet's verses damn him to the continuous suffering of unrequited love experienced in all its intensity, but this love, as set forth in the poem, does not necessarily damn him to the eternal fires of hell.

But what if it is not just hyperbole? Could one say that the idolatrous language in lyric love poetry accomplishes something more for the poet than just a rhetorical effect, and yet does so without necessarily becoming sinful? A second possible reason for why transgressing the first commandment proved so tempting fulfils this criterion. In all three collections, if one sees 'idol' as a substitute for the word 'image', it can be taken to evoke the Neo-Platonic concept of the Idea.²⁶ One poet from this period, whom I have not yet mentioned, probably represents the purest form of this phenomenon.²⁷ Joachim Du Bellay, in his collection entitled *L'Olive* of 1550, writes about the lady and his love for her in a much more intellectual fashion; for him, the Petrarchan *canzoniere* is a poetic and perhaps even spiritual exercise, in which the woman is an instrument of poetic creation whereby the poet brings himself closer to the divine. In admiring her beauty and in expressing that admiration in verse, the poet sublimates his desire for the woman and transforms it into the desire for God. Thus, since Neo-Platonism informs so much lyric love poetry from Petrarch onward, it could be argued that the idolatry to which this poetry refers is not idolatry at all, but simply a recognition of how the beauty of the lady incarnates the Idea of Beauty, which leads the poet to contemplation of the divine. This theory would support the view put forward by some critics that Scève's title, *Délie*, is an anagram in French for *l'idée* ('idea').²⁸ If this were true, the connection to Neo-Platonism would be clear and the interpretation of the word idol as synonymous to the Neo-Platonic Idea would be supported, at least in Scève's case. Ronsard's focus on the visual in the *Amours* might also lend credence to

26 The influence of Neo-Platonism on Renaissance poetry is well established, having as a principal source Marsilio Ficino's *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love*, for which see the translation by J. Sears (Dallas: 1985). See also: Magnard P., *Marsile Ficin: les platonismes à la Renaissance* (Paris: 2001).

27 It is for this reason, namely, that Du Bellay's love poetry represents a pure form of Neo-Platonic spiritual exercise and not the transgression of the first commandment, that I did not include *L'Olive* in the first part of my analysis.

28 Charpentier, "Préface" 22.

an application of a Neo-Platonic hermeneutic to his use of the idol. On the other hand, Scève and Ronsard, in their emphasis—even over-emphasis—on the sensual, the physical, and the passionate seem to diverge from the essential nature of Neo-Platonism, which would normally be directed toward helping the poet leave all these incarnate desires behind. Gisèle Mathieu-Castellani suggests that in Ronsard, for example, Neo-Platonic elements can coexist with a more carnal imagery. The vibrant sensuality and a taste for pleasure evident in his poetry and the poetry of other members of the Pléiade distances them from a traditional Neo-Platonic ethic, even though they might still have employed its language and imagery.²⁹ Petrarch, on the other hand, in his apparent conversion experience and his devout invocation of the Virgin Mary in RS 366, gives the appearance of having experienced sublimation in addition to conversion. In the end, none of the three works necessarily precludes a Neo-Platonic reading that identifies the woman's beauty as an allegory of the divine, but such a reading may not accurately reflect the poet's level of engagement with Neo-Platonic philosophy. The idol as Neo-Platonic imagery may serve in this case as just another device that facilitates poetic expression.

The final possibility I want to consider is reflective of the spiritual crisis that raged during much of this period; it steers the poets' attraction to Neo-Platonic processes that purport to connect to the divine, in a direction neither virtuous nor orthodox. Herein, I only propose to reason as to why the image of idolatry in particular figured so prominently in lyric love poetry; I am not attempting to explain the wider trend of lyric love poetry as a genre. Although I remain sceptical that Scève embraced his own damnation, the contravention of the first commandment, as staged in his poetry, may have fulfilled a real need. In this case, it is the need to have contact with the divine. If we look at the Old Testament, the moments where the ancient Israelites were most tempted to lapse into idolatry were during times of God's perceived absence. In *Exodus* 32, for example, 'When the people became aware of Moses' delay in coming down from the mountain', they erected the Golden Calf. In the context of these collections of love poetry, the lady is more concretely perceptible than a divinity, even while displaying many characteristics of the divine. She is close, since the poet actually sees her, and yet she is distant. Thus, the image of idolatry fits as a means to bring her and the divine even closer. On both accounts, as a distant and yet visibly concrete beauty, the lady as idol constitutes a substitute for the God whose distance was felt particularly during the early modern

29 Mathieu-Castellani, *Les thèmes amoureux* 97.

period.³⁰ The consequences of Renaissance humanism and nominalism, the latter of which reaches back into the Middle Ages, are in my view both catalysts for a distancing of God from human beings that may explain the poets' motivations.³¹ From a theological perspective, the nominalist focus on the immediate had the consequential effect of making the divine seem all the more abstract and removed from the human sphere.³² In their response, these poets focused on the lady—and in the case of Ronsard—on poetic creation, to fill the void. The transition away from the medieval period where God was said to be present at every moment—whether truly present or not—could have incited the poet to create his own Golden Calf amidst and in response to the perceived absence of God. This is why the language of idolatry might have seemed so apt. The lady is not just a possible temptation with respect to the sixth commandment; rather, she stands proxy for the divine, thereby answering the urgent need to experience the divine in one's life. Whether an actual woman or a narcissistic embodiment of the penchant for one's own verses, the object of the poet's idolatrous gaze functions as a substitute for a God whose concrete presence has become ever more elusive.

In conclusion, based on the lyric love poet's use of other types of imagery—ranging from the political to the mythological, and to the explicitly biblical—one can imagine all three scenarios for all three poets, or even some combination

30 For an excellent study on Christianity during the sixteenth century, see: Febvre L., *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century*, trans. B. Gottlieb (Cambridge, Mass.: 1982). Part IV, entitled "The Limits of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century" (335–454), is particularly pertinent.

31 Cyrille Michon distills nominalism down to two principles: to propose only concrete instances when speaking about the nature of existence, and to rid the semiological world of universality and abstraction (*Nominalisme: La théorie de la signification d'Occam* (Paris: 1994) 16). The question of nominalism's persistent influence from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance is a large one. See: Huizinga J., *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. R.J. Payton – U. Mammitzsch (Chicago: 1996); and William Courtenay, who engages Huizinga on the question, in "Huizinga's Heirs: Interpreting the Late Middle Ages," in Aertsen J.A. – Pickavé M. (eds.), *'Herbst des Mittelalters'? Fragen zur Bewertung des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: 2004) 25–36. I tend to agree with Courtenay's assessment that realism did not win out over nominalism, but that the latter reemerged as the Renaissance began and progressed.

32 Blumenberg H., *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, trans. R.M. Wallace (Cambridge, Mass.: 1983) 328: 'The modern age began, not indeed as the epoch of the death of God, but as the epoch of the hidden God, the *deus absconditus*—and a hidden God is *pragmatically* as good as dead. The nominalist theology induces a human relation to the world whose implicit content could have been formulated in the postulate that man had to behave as though God were dead'.

thereof. The seriousness of idolatry, Neo-Platonic trends and the perceived distance between God and creation all have the potential to render this type of poetic language surrounding the beloved more effective. Exploration of the depths of human desire is not incompatible with contemplation of deeply spiritual or theological ends, even if the threat of transgression, even damnation, comes into play. Contravention of the first commandment entails the ultimate rejection of one's faith and relationship to God. It is the first on the list of commandments for a reason. From a rhetorical standpoint, idolatry offers tantalizing possibilities for the language of love, passion and obsession. Idolatrous language infuses these poets' rhetoric with the power to make their fixations, and their feelings concerning them, resonate. It may highlight the intensity of their experience, their sublimation of it, or even the anxiety of a context in which God seems more absent. Nevertheless, idolatry likely remains but a poetic device, albeit one that certainly attracts attention because of what it reveals about its time and its provocative imagery of transgression against God's fundamental commandment to love him above all else.

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The Ten Commandments and Pastoral Care in Late-Medieval and Early Modern Europe: An Inquiry into Expectations and Outcomes

Robert J. Bast

1 The Long Shadow of the Reformation

One of the enduring legacies of Reformation polemic is the myth of the indifferent medieval Church, unwilling or unable to attend to the religious instruction of the laity.¹ The usefulness of this myth is readily apparent. The alleged failure of the Catholic establishment in such a basic obligation cleared a space that Evangelical reformers could fill, and in their eagerness to do so they sometimes wrote as if they had invented lay catechesis. It is thus for example in an anecdote reported by the Lutheran pastor Justus Jonas:

Ich hab auf ain zeit ain Historien von unserm lieben Vatter Doctor Martin Luther gehört, das ain ungelerter Stifftpfaffe (wie dann wenig oder gar kain Thümpfaffe von Got vil waißt oder zu wissen begert) soll dise wort gesagt haben: “Wer hat doch sein lebtag gehört, das so vil neüwes, seltzames dings auffkomt: Man begint yetz die Zehen Gebott zu predigen in der Kirchen!”

I once heard a story told by our dear Father Doctor Martin Luther. He said that an ignorant mass-priest (for few if any mass-priests know or care to know much about God) had spoken these words: “Who in his whole life ever would have believed that so many new and peculiar things could happen? They’ve even begun preaching the Ten Commandments in church!”²

1 Still valuable for the assessment and refutation of this topos is Duggan L.G., “The Unresponsiveness of the Medieval Church: A Reconsideration”, *Sixteenth Century Journal* 9, 1 (1978) 3–26.

2 See Jonas’ introduction to Spangenberg Johann, *Groß Catechismus und Kinder Leer* (1541), in Reu J.M. (ed.), *Quellen zur Geschichte des kirchlichen Unterrichts in der evangelischen Kirche*

The authenticity of this story remains an open question; it does not appear in Luther's published works, but then Jonas was privy to countless semi-private conversations around Luther's dinner table in the Black Cloister in Wittenberg, where Doctor Martin would famously hold forth on any topic generally related to the progress of the evangelical movement. This much at least can be said of the story: it rings true. Jonas gets the tone just right, capturing both Luther's characteristic sarcasm and the self-congratulatory nature of Protestant self-assessments when measuring themselves against their Catholic counterparts.

Today there is little danger of taking this story at face value. A generation of scholarship has now underscored the growing importance of the Ten Commandments in the pastoral and pedagogical programs of the Western Church long before the Reformation. A rough sketch of the growth and trajectory of this development, now made clearer thanks to the contributions of Lesley Smith to the early history of formal scholarship on the Decalogue study,³ reveals a series of overlapping academic and reforming communities that employed the Commandments in their fundamental programs of lay religious instruction, beginning in the twelfth century. These initiatives crested in the sixteenth century with the fragmentation of Christendom into rival confessions, each promoting their own theological agenda in official or semi-official catechisms. The major impetus in this direction came in the later Middle Ages: from such schoolmen turned public intellectuals as Jean Gerson and his conciliar contemporaries; from Observant monks whose targets for renewal included the world of lay piety; and from such centres of production of vernacular devotional literature as the Vienna school and the Windesheim congregation.⁴

Deutschlands zwischen 1530–1600. Part I: Quellen zur Geschichte des Katechismus-Unterrichts (Gütersloh: 1911) 1.2/2.299, 29–30.

3 Smith L., *The Ten Commandments. Interpreting the Bible in the Medieval World*, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions 175 (Leiden – Boston: 2014). See her contribution in the present volume.

4 On the origins and development of late-medieval Decalogue instruction see: Bast R., *Honor Your Fathers. Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, 1400–1600* (Leiden – Boston: 1997) 1–53. For Gerson's role see: *ibid.*, 13–23; Hobbins D., "Gerson on Lay Devotion", in McGuire, B.P. (ed.), *A Companion to Jean Gerson* (Leiden – Boston: 2006) 41–78, esp. 68f. For the role of the Observant movement see: Mixson J. – Roest B. (eds.), *A Companion to Observant Reform in the Later Middle Ages and Beyond* (Leiden – Boston: 2014), especially the contributions by Mixson, Delcorno and Muessig. On the vernacular tradition see most recently Heß C., *Social Imagery in Middle Low German. Didactic Literature and Metaphorical Representation (1470–1517)* (Leiden – Boston: 2013). See also the definitive study of the Vienna school: Wolf K., *Hof, Universität, Laien: Literatur- und sprachgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum deutschen Schrifttum der Wiener Schule des Spätmittelalters* (Wiesbaden: 2006). For the

It is worth remembering that this discovery is still relatively recent. Very late into the twentieth century the standard narrative held that the chief innovation of Protestant Christianity was a determined dedication to lay catechesis, through the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. This notion seemed so self-evident that it persisted even where there was proof to the contrary readily at hand. By way of example, let us consider the case of Strasbourg, to which we will return.

Strasbourg of course figures very large in the history of the German Reformation; its chief preacher, the former Dominican monk Martin Bucer, helped to secure the imperial cities of the southwest for the cause of reform. Bucer partnered with Philip of Hesse and Jacob Sturm to bring those cities into the Protestant military alliance and became a figure of towering significance for the formation of the Reformed tradition.⁵ He was also a tireless promoter of the Ten Commandments, working them into numerous regional Church ordinances as guidelines for public morality and incorporating them into three separate catechisms in the 1530s–1540s. The critical edition of these catechisms, published only in 1987, appeared with a historical introduction that perpetuated a familiar claim: Protestant catechists had restored a tradition of the ancient church that had disappeared in the Middle Ages, with Bucer alleged to have operated in a 'katechetisches Vakuum'.⁶

This persistent blind spot has not only prevented us from recognizing the vast body of late-medieval catechetical literature, but the place of Strasbourg itself in that tradition. In the 1370s the city was host to Marquard von Lindau, the most prolific German Franciscan writer of the later Middle Ages, whose book *Die zehe Gebote* was, in the words of one recent commentator, *the* best-seller in the German language before the Reformation, surviving in more than 140 manuscripts.⁷ But even that designation is deceptive, for Marquard's book on the Ten Commandments continued to circulate during the Reformation. It was snapped up twice in the early sixteenth century by local printers eager

Modern Devotion and the Windesheim congregation see: Van Engen J., *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life. The Devotio Moderna and the World of the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: 2008), with relevant material in chapters 4 and 8, *passim*.

5 The best biography of Bucer remains Greschat M., *Martin Bucer: A Reformer and His Times*, trans. S. Buckwalter (Louisville – London: 2004 [*Martin Bucer: Ein Reformator und seine Zeit*. Munich: 1990]). For Bucer's contribution to the Reformed tradition see also: Gordon B., *The Swiss Reformation* (Manchester – New York: 2002) 146f.

6 Stupperich R. (ed.), *Martin Bucers Katechismen aus den Jahren 1534, 1537, 1543. Martin Bucers Deutsche Schriften* [hereafter *BDS*], 19 vols. (Gütersloher: 1960f.) VI. 3, 20 n.1.

7 Mossman S., *Marquard von Lindau and the Challenges of Religious Life in Late Medieval Germany. The Passion, the Eucharist, the Virgin Mary* (Oxford – New York: 2010) 246.

to feed the popular market for vernacular religious literature, first in 1516 and again in 1520—the latter, coincidentally, the same year in which Bucer, still a Dominican monk, first came to the attention of the German Inquisition as a follower of Martin Luther.⁸ The 1520 edition of Marquard's book, moreover, was handsomely illustrated with engravings by Strasbourg's own Hans Baldung Grien that demonstrated how each commandment is kept or transgressed. Grien would later provide similar illustrations for Bucer's own catechisms.⁹

From 1478–1510 Strasbourg of course was also the home of Johann Geiler von Kaisersberg, prolific preacher and publisher of vernacular religious instruction, avid disciple of Jean Gerson, and translator of Gerson's *Opusculum tripartitum*,¹⁰ which effectively functioned as Strasbourg's first Decalogue-based catechism. Gerson's catechism, employed by Geiler over a thirty-year career, sometimes occasioned tumult and resistance as the preacher battled public sin, exhorting citizens and magistrates alike to conform their lives to the standards of God's Commandments. Geiler's whole career has been summed up neatly by his recent biographer as an effort to produce, by religious instruction and reform proposals, a civic community based on the Law of God.¹¹

None of this should have been hard to establish in 1987 by the editors of Bucer's German Catechisms. Geiler's reputation as the most important German preacher before Luther was a commonplace, the critical edition of his works well under way in the 1980s. Furthermore Marquard von Lindau's *Die zehe Gebote* could have been cited by the editors of the 1980 edition published in the fine Rodopi Press series, *Quellen und Forschungen zur Erbauungsliteratur*.¹² Such oversights reveal the very long shadow that the Reformation continues to cast over the topic before us, obscuring the massive investment of time, energy and resources that medieval authors devoted to the teaching of the Ten Commandments in advance of their Protestant successors.

8 Van Maren J.W. (ed.), *Marquard von Lindau: Die Zehe Gebote (Straßburg, 1516 und 1520)* (Amsterdam: 1980).

9 Stupperich (ed.), *BDS* VI.3, 25 n.48.

10 Geiler von Kaisersberg Johann, *Der dreieckeicht Spiegel. Von den gebotten. Von der beichte. Und von der kunst des wol sterbens*, published in an anthology entitled *Das Irrig Schaff* (Strasbourg: 1510). On the origins, significance and circulation in German-speaking lands of Gerson's *Opusculum tripartitum* see: Bast, *Honor Your Fathers* 13–20.

11 Voltmer R., *Wie der Wächter auf dem Turm. Ein Prediger und seine Stadt. Johannes Geiler von Kaysersberg (1445–1510) und Straßburg* (Trier: 2005) 37; 397f.

12 See note 8, above.

2 Voicing Expectations

What were the shapers of this tradition hoping to accomplish? At basis, the extraordinary energy devoted to teaching the Ten Commandments was intimately related to recurring concerns with pastoral care. This was true already in the thirteenth century, when the new requirement for annual confession—promulgated by Lateran IV—stimulated the production of episcopal manuals such as that of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, which required that ‘[...] uniusque pastor animarium quilibet sacerdos parochialis sciat decalogum, id est, decem mandata legis Mosaicae; eademque populo sibi subjecto frequenter praedicat ex exponat’ ([...] every shepherd of souls and every priest of a diocese know the Decalogue, that is, the Ten Commandments of the Law of Moses, and that each cleric preach and expound them frequently to his people).¹³ But as John Bossy has noted, the medieval Church already *had* a moral rubric for confession, the Seven Deadly Sins, and it was several centuries before the Commandments overtook them in popularity.¹⁴ Because authors rarely spoke to the relative merits of one system over the other, we are left to speculate about what it was that made the Commandments increasingly attractive as a means of handling sin.

I am persuaded, first, that the chief attraction of the Commandments lays in their status as the *lex dei*, God’s own Law, and second, that the late-medieval and early modern clerics who employed the Commandments did so in part because more law seemed to be exactly what troubled times called for. Indeed the complaint that Church and Society were in crisis was virtually ubiquitous throughout the later Middle Ages. As I have argued elsewhere, this trope must be understood as ideological, for it authorized extraordinary methods—sometimes desperate, unconventional, or illegal ones—to implement reform. At one point or another this crisis ideology proved useful to the advancement of the Observant movement, the Protestant Reformation, and the Catholic response to Protestantism in Germany during the critical decades before Trent.¹⁵

13 *Constitutiones ejusdem Roberti, Episcopi Lincolnensis*, in Pegge S., *The Life of Robert Grosseteste* (London: 1793) Appendix VI 315.

14 Bossy J., “Moral Arithmetic: Seven Sins into Ten Commandments”, in Leites E. (ed.), *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe* (New York: 1988) 214–43, here 215. Though Bossy’s insights remain valuable as regards the differences between the two traditions in tone and emphasis, he was demonstrably unaware of the extensiveness of the medieval Decalogue tradition and his article has been superseded by more recent literature.

15 Bast, *Honor Your Fathers* 32ff.

Unlike the Seven Sins, the Commandments came with an impressive, visually evocative biblical provenance: God himself descending on Sinai, the mountain shrouded in cloud, blasted by thunder and lightning, the people of Israel huddled in fear below while Moses receives God's own Law, etched with God's finger into the two stone tablets, and buttressed by a set of threats and promises recorded in *Deuteronomy* 28:

If you will only obey the Lord your God, by diligently observing all of His commandments [...] the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth; all these blessings shall come upon you [...] Blessed shall you be in the city and the field, blessed shall be the fruit of your womb, the fruit of the ground [...] blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl [...] blessed shall you be when you come in and blessed shall you be when you go out. The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before you; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways [...] The Lord will establish you as his holy people, as he has sworn to do, if you keep the commandments of the Lord and walk in his ways.¹⁶

Conversely:

But if you will not obey the Lord your God by diligently observing all his commandments and decrees [...] then all these curses shall come upon you [...] Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field. Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed shall be the fruit of your womb, the fruit of the ground [...] The Lord will set upon you disaster, panic and frustration in everything you attempt to do, until you are destroyed and perish [...] The Lord will afflict you with consumption, fever, with fiery heat and drought, with blight and mildew [...] He will change the rain of your land into powder and only dust shall come down upon you [...] The Lord will cause you to be defeated by your enemies [...] you shall go out against them one way and flee before them seven ways.¹⁷

It is striking to note how many expositors of the Commandments quote these very lines and details. They are recited in the Decalogue sermons of Bertold of Regensburg, in the guide to confession of Ludolf von Göttingen, in the

16 *Deut.* 28:1–9. I have used the *New Revised Standard Version* (Oxford – New York: 1962).

17 *Ibid.*, vv. 15–25.

vernacular devotional texts of Dietrich Coelde, in the *Grosse Seelentrost*, in Stephan von Landskron's *Hymelstrasz*, in the sermons of Jan Hus, in the major catechisms of all the Protestant Reformers—good biblicists that they were—and in the majority of German Catholic catechisms produced before Trent, including the ubiquitous catechetical works of Petrus Canisius, adopted by the Jesuits for their evangelistic missions in both the Old and New Worlds.¹⁸

A closer look at four representative works can provide us with additional insight into what authors expected of the Commandments. I have chosen accounts that are notable for their 'existential moments'—places where authors speak directly about their concerns and aims.

The first is the well-known open letter of Jean Gerson, written to Pierre d'Ailly around 1400, in which Gerson pronounced the Church mortally ill due to the negligence of the clergy and the ignorance of the people. Gerson's proposed remedy was a catechism that placed special emphasis on the Decalogue:

[...] in tanta angustia temporis et inter tot animarum pericula [...] Item forte expediret sicut olim tempore quarundam pestilentiarum facultas medicorum composuit tractatulum ad informandum singulos, ita fieret per facultatem vel de mandato ejus aliquis tractatulus super punctis principalibus nostrae religionis, et specialiter de praeceptis, ad instructionem simplicium [...]

[...] just as the schools of medicine wrote pamphlets to instruct people how to manage in times of plague, so now it would be good if a short work were written by the Paris faculty, or by someone under their direction, dealing with the chief points of our religion, and especially with the Ten Commandments, for the instruction of the simple [...]¹⁹

In the event, Gerson produced such a work himself, the so-called *Opusculum tripartitum*, which would prove extraordinarily influential in both France and Germany (though it seems to have had little reception in England, probably because of Gerson's close association with France during the Hundred Years' War). Gerson also applied the Ten Commandments himself, in legislative fashion, when presiding over a 1417 condemnation of the sect of the Flagellants as agents of sedition, superstition and sectarianism, guilty of transgressing divine Law—here defined as the Law of Christ, as revealed in the Ten Commandments:

18 Bast, *Honor Your Fathers* 43f.

19 Gerson Jean, *Jean Gerson. Œuvres complètes*, 19 vols., ed. P. Glorieux (Paris: 1960–1973) II ll. 23–28, here 23.

‘Lex Christi sufficienter data est in praeceptis decalogi [...]’ (‘the Law of Christ which is sufficiently revealed in the Decalogue [...]').²⁰

Our second witness is Ulrich von Pottenstein, court preacher to Albrecht IV of Austria in the early fifteenth century, who authored a massive 1,200 folio collection of catechetical sermons delivered in Vienna, nearly half of which cover the Ten Commandments.²¹ In the course of his teaching on the first commandment—‘Thou shalt have no other gods before Me’—Ulrich suddenly breaks into a personal anecdote:

Da must du noch aines hören von ainer c3awbrearrin, die was c3u meinen czeiten dac3 Newnkirchen pey der Newnstat. Da was ain gelewffe c3u als c3u ainem hailtum und gelawbten mechtig lewt an si, die nicht wol c3u nennen sint. Zu der chäm ainer meiner pharrmanne, dem was merkchleiche flust geschehen. Er gab ir sein hab, si versprach im sein hab wider zu pringen und gab im ainen brief, nach dem schölde er sich richten [...] Da er haym chöm, da lie33 er im den brief lesen. Da ward in sein gweissen leren wie da3 ain gespötte wear und wolde dem brief nicht nach chömen. Der chom an mich und lawtet also: [...]

Now I must tell you a few things about a witch, who in my day was in Neukirchen, near the new part of the city. People were streaming out to visit her as if to see something sacred, and among them were powerful people whose names are better left unspoken. One of my parishioners visited her, and something remarkable happened. He gave her his money, and she promised to help him recover some goods that had been stolen from him. She gave him a letter. He was supposed to read it when he returned home, and to follow the directions written in it [...] After he returned home, he permitted himself to begin reading it, but his conscience told him it was a sin, and he stopped part way through. He gave the letter to me, and this is what it said [...]²²

What follows, remarkably, appears to be a verbatim copy of a spell for finding stolen objects, which Ulrich inserted into his treatise. Its veracity is suggested by what it does not say. There is nearly nothing in it that could be called diabolical. Rather, the spell employs orthodox prayers and invokes traditional

20 Gerson, *Contra sectam flagellantium*, ed. Glorieux, x 46–51, here 48.

21 There is yet no comprehensive study, however see: Baptist-Hlawatsch G., *Ulrich von Pottenstein. Dekalog-Auslegung. Das erste Gebot* (Tübingen: 1995).

22 Ibid., 112 ll.3–11.

Christian sources of power: the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria, the Creed, the Five Wounds of Christ, and St. Christopher. The closest it comes to true heterodoxy is its invocation of a personified Death. Yet Ulrich glosses this text in his conclusion:

Da pey mügen die frumen Christen merkchen und versten, wie gar sy des tewfels mit hawt und har sint, die sölicher c3awbernüsse phlegen, und die mit sampt, die an si gelauben.

By this may pious Christians recognize and understand how completely those who perform witchcraft belong to the devil, together with those who believe in them.²³

Ulrich's work must be understood in the context of the network of priests, Observant monks and university theologians of the so-called Vienna School, which has become famous both for its striking productivity in vernacular religious literature—much of it concerned with the Ten Commandments—and for a precocious and ominous preoccupation with traditional ritual practices that authorities labelled 'witchcraft'. These two concerns overlapped, of course; condemnation of witchcraft occupies an inordinate place in expositions of the first commandment.²⁴

Our third witness is Johannes Wolff (or Lupi), chaplain of the St. Peterskapelle in Frankfurt am Main from circa 1452–1468 and author of an idiosyncratic manual for parish priests, primarily devoted to the teaching and application of the Ten Commandments. Wolff was an unusually enthusiastic promoter of the Decalogue as a tool of pastoral care; it seems he was moved to conviction by close study of Gerson's *Opusculum tripartitum*, which Wolff quotes extensively.²⁵ With a full measure of evangelical zeal, he explains how the Commandments can subsume all other traditional forms of doctrinal and moral instruction: the Creed, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Eight Beatitudes, the Seven Works of Mercy, the Six Sins against the Holy Spirit, the Seven Sacraments, et cetera. He lists fourteen benefits of frequent use of the Commandments in worship, and corresponding arguments to use against anyone, lay or cleric, who objects to

23 Ibid., 113 ll. 13–15.

24 Baumann K., *Aberglaube für Laien. Zur Programmatik und Überlieferung spätmittelalterlicher Superstitionenkritik* (Würzburg: 1989).

25 "Das Beichtbüchlein des Frankfurter Kaplans Johannes Wolff vom Jahre 1478" in Falk, F. (ed.), *Drei Beichtbüchlein nach den zehn Geboten aus der Frühzeit der Buchdruckerkunst* (Münster: 1907) 5–75; see also Bast, *Honor Your Fathers* 23–31.

them. With painstaking clarity, Wolff explains how the preacher in the pulpit, holding up his fingers and repeating each commandment slowly, may teach his congregation to memorize them ‘whether they like to or not’—a system he surely used himself, for it was memorialized after his death in a wall sculpture, now in the collection of the historical museum of Frankfurt, which shows Wolff gesticulating precisely in the fashion prescribed.²⁶

Wolff’s motivations were those of a dedicated pastor who took the sacramental obligations of the parish priest seriously. With exasperation, he noted how poorly his parishioners prepared for the task, mocking the ‘useless and empty’²⁷ confessions he regularly heard:

Lieber herr, ich bede nit gern, ich fast nit gern, ich gee nit gern zu kyrchen, ich fluchen und schelden und sweren und byn unfriedlichen mit minem man etc [...].

Dear sir, I don’t like to pray, I don’t like to fast, I don’t like to come to church, I curse and scold and swear and quarrel with my husband [...].²⁸

This kind of experience made Wolff fume at the ‘fabulas et impertinencia’ (‘fables and impertinence’) he encountered in the rite of confession.²⁹ His ire flowed freely: lay people were

[...] obstinati, indurati, rudes, ceci ac asini, asini, asini in confessione comparentes, eis consciencias de mille iterum mille peccatis perpetratis contra legem dei non formantes.

[...] obstinate, inflexible, ignorant, blind, and asses! asses! asses! when preparing for confession, not bothering themselves about the thousands upon thousands of sins they have perpetrated against the Law of God!³⁰

Wolff’s irascibility must be understood in the context of his times. His era was marked by deep concerns about pastoral care, and the literature thereon (some

26 A photograph of this remarkable pedagogical memorial appears in the frontispiece of Falk’s edition (as in note 25 above).

27 Falk, *Drei Beichtbüchlein* 66 l. 14 ‘Item iam quasi omnium confessio est inutilis et nulla [...]’.

28 Ibid., 66 ll. 14–20.

29 Ibid., l. 20.

30 Ibid., 70 ll. 5–7.

of it written by Gerson, whose work Wolff revered) stressed the culpability of both penitent *and* confessor where the act of confession fell short of the ideal.³¹

Our last example comes from Martin Luther's famous and consequential attack on monastic vows, the 1521 treatise *De votis monasticis iudicium*. Luther introduces the treatise with an open letter to his father:

[...] Scire te volo, filium tuum eo promovisse, ut iam persuasissimus sit, nihil esse sanctius, nihil prius, nihil religiosius observandum, quam divinum mandatum [...].

I wish you to know that your son has come so far as to be altogether persuaded that there is nothing holier, nothing more important, nothing which must be more scrupulously observed than God's commandment [...].³²

Luther then recalls the battle that erupted when he chose to take monastic vows against the wishes of his parents:

[...] repente tu me reverberas et retundis tam opportune et apte, ut in tota vita mea ex homine vix audierem verbum, quod potentius in me sonuerit et heserit. "Et non etiam (dicebas) audisti tu parentibus esse obediendum?"

[...] you suddenly responded with a reply so fitting and so much to the point that in all my life I have hardly ever heard any man say anything that struck me so deeply and stayed with me so long. You said: "Have you not also heard that parents must be obeyed?"³³

Luther's 'discovery' of the inviolable nature of the Ten Commandments thus serves his purposes, since they function as the higher law that cancels out his own monastic vow. But the Commandments do more, for elsewhere Luther charges that the 'papists' have cunningly usurped each of the Commandments with clever, counterfeit decrees, undermining the proper obedience owed to

31 Hamm B., "Volition and Inadequacy as a Topic in Late-Medieval Pastoral Care of Penitents", in Bast R. (ed.), *The Reformation of Faith in the Context of Late Medieval Theology and Piety. Essays by Berndt Hamm* (Leiden – Boston: 2004) 88–128.

32 *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Abteilung Werke*, 120 vols. (Weimar: 1883–2009) [hereafter WA] VIII 573, ll. 13–15.

33 *Ibid.*, VIII 574, ll. 4–8.

God, society, and the biological family. This was literally a crisis of biblical proportion for Luther, as it heralded the End Times:

Es können auch keyn ketzer den Paryßer unnd Papisten vergleycht werden. Denn es sind noch nie keyn ketzer gewest, die das gantz Euangelion, das gantz gesetz Mosi, den gantzen glawben und Christum gar underdruckt, verdampt und verluecknet haben als die Paryser und Papisten thun, doch under dem scheyn und namen Christi. Darumb ist verkundiget wurden, das aller ketzer gewel und grundtsuppe sollen tzu letzt under dem Antichrist ynn eyn hauffen tzu sammen kommen.

No heretic can be compared to the Parisians and the Papists. For there were never heretics who so completely suppressed, condemned and abjured the whole Gospel, the whole Law of Moses, the faith and Christ himself, and in the guise and name of Christ. Thus it was proclaimed, that in the end times, under the Antichrist, the horrors and dregs of all heresies should come together in one heap.³⁴

Each in their own way, Gerson, Ulrich, Wolff and Luther reveal a shared conviction that the application of the Ten Commandments would ameliorate specific and immediate problems that threatened the fabric of Church and society. With the gift of hindsight and several decades of dedicated scholarship, the amount of energy that we now know they applied to this task, over several centuries and across all confessional boundaries, cannot but impress.

3 Assessing Outcomes

The question that naturally arises is about the effectiveness of such efforts. At the outset it must be acknowledged that there are considerable difficulties in assessing degrees of success or failure. What would it take, for example, to determine whether the teaching of the fifth commandment—‘Thou shalt not kill’—affected the rate of violent death in Western Christendom? Or to what extent the commandment not to commit adultery—broadly interpreted as any illicit sexual conduct, including lust—shaped the real sexual behaviour of women and men? Or when, where, and under what circumstances (if ever!) the commandment to ‘remember the Sabbath day and keep it Holy’ manifested itself in regular and reverent church attendance? These are not the kinds

34 Luther Martin, *Vom Mißbrauch der Messe* (1521), WA VIII 548, ll. 3–9.

of questions for which comparative data exist, yet anyone reasonably familiar with the later Middle Ages will likely smile at the notion that moralists effected the changes for which they called. But there is a bigger question on the horizon: does the success of the Reformation not highlight the utter failure of late-medieval Decalogue instruction, at least in those regions where Protestantism took root?

To consider this problem more fully, I shall now turn to two recurring themes in late-medieval interpretations of the Commandments: the proper disposition of the believer toward saints and relics, and the honour due the clergy as 'Spiritual Fathers'. As to the former: expositors regularly took pains to reconcile the first commandment—"Thou shalt have no other gods before me [...] nor make unto thee any graven images [...]"—with the cultic practices associated with the veneration of the saints, their relics and their images. Much of this advice was more sophisticated than one might expect. Stephan von Landskron taught for example that it was a sin for people to

[...] die geschnic3te grabne unnd gemalte oder sunst gemachte bilder anbeten als für sich selber oder als im die helffen solten. Wenn sy mügen im nit mer helffen den als ein ander holc3 oder ein andere varb. Wir sollen nur durch die pilder ermant warden d3 wir gedencken an unsern herren oder sein heiliges leiden. Oder auch an die heiligen der pilder wir sehen unnd die eren und anrueffen in unsern notturfft das sy unser helffer seyen vor got dem allmaechten der unß allain gehelffen mag [...].

[...] pray to carved and painted images in themselves, as if these could help them. For such images can no more help them than any other piece of painted wood. Images are there only to remind us that we should think about our Lord or his holy Passion, or about the saints whose pictures we see, to honour them and call on them to be our helpers before almighty God, who alone has the power to help us.³⁵

In Geiler von Kaisersberg's free translation of Gerson's *Opusculum*, Geiler sounds a similar note as he details what the first commandment teaches:

[...] das wir auch darzuo eren sollen / das heilig gebein der heiligen / die heiligen stette / unnd die bild der heiligen. Nitt umb ir selbs willen.

35 Jaspers G.J., *Stephan von Landskron, Die Hymelstrasz. Mit einer Einleitung und vergleichenden Betrachtung zum Sprachgebrauch in den Frühdrucken (Augsburg 1484, 1501 und 1510)* (Amsterdam: 1979) xlv(r) 26–35.

Sunder darumb / wenn so wir sie ansehend / so bietend wire ee den dingen / die durch sollich bild bedeütet sind / nach gewohnheit / der müter der heiligen kirchen / anders wer es abgoettery.

[...] that we should also honour the holy relics, shrines and images of the Saints—not for their own sake, but so that when we regard these things we offer them reverence for the sake of the things represented, according to the custom of Holy Mother Church. Otherwise it would be idolatry.³⁶

This emphasis on representational status occurs again under the fourth commandment, where late-medieval expositors regularly and painstakingly insisted that the laity were to honour the clergy as ‘Spiritual Fathers’. Stephan von Landskron, citing the words of Jesus according to *Luke* 10:16 (‘Those who scorn you scorn me’) warned that anyone who mocks or dishonours the clergy mocks God himself.³⁷ Another anonymous text elaborated on this theme with a dramatic emotional appeal:

[...] so dick der mensch ainen gaistlichen man ann sin er redt, als dick truckt er ain durne kroon unserm herrn in sin haupt. Wann die prierster sind höpt der heiligen christenhait / so dick du jm unrecht tuost so dick nagelst cristum an daß crutz. So dick du jm schmechlich redest so dick spüwest du an daß antluc3 unserß herrn. als dick du si hassest oder ir wort oder ir wreck schmechest so dick stichst du unsern herrn in sin seiten.

[...] as often as you dishonour a cleric, you press the crown of thorns onto the head of our Lord. For priests are the head of Christendom. As often as you treat them unjustly you nail Christ to the cross. As often as you speak to them scornfully you spit in the face of our Lord. As often as you hate them or despise their words or works, you thrust a spear in Christ’s side.³⁸

As I have shown elsewhere, the matter of the honour due to clergy must count among the most neuralgic themes of the entire Decalogue genre.³⁹ Medieval

36 Geiler, *Der dreyeckecht Spiegel* (as in note 10) Bb vi, ll. 21–29.

37 *Die Hymelstrasz* (as in note 35) xlv(v), ll. 7–13.

38 Anon., Munich Stadtbibliothek cgm 445, 129r–v. This source appears to be a fifteenth-century adaptation of a Decalogue sermon by Heinrich von Friemar der Jüngere, OESA (d. 1354).

39 For the playing out of this theme in the medieval era see: Bast, *Honor Your Fathers* 108–121; for Protestant and Catholic reformers of the sixteenth century, *ibid.*, 131–145.

exegetes demonstrated a profound concern with protecting the authority of the clergy, even where they candidly admitted to its shortcomings. In Strasbourg, Geiler's exposition, drawn from Gerson, characteristically employed a sober and straightforward directive that drew on arguments first developed against the Donatists:

[...] wann umb boßheit willen etlicher diener der kirchen / soll von keinem christen menschen / der stat der prelate / und geistlichen / verlämmbdet und geletzt werden. Wann auch der touff / die meß / oder ander sacrament / sein krafft nit verlürt / umb boßheit willen des dieners.

[...] for no Christian should defame or injure the estate of the clergy on account of the wickedness of some of its servants. For baptism, the Mass and the other sacraments do not lose their power on account of the sins of the servant.⁴⁰

If we turn now to the Reformation, the difficulty in assessing the effectiveness of late medieval exegesis becomes apparent. For it would not be too much to see anticlericalism and iconoclasm, prompted of course by evangelical preaching, as the twin engines that propelled the early Reformation in Central Europe. The countless episodes of iconoclastic destruction of 'idolatrous' relics, the heckling of priests in the pulpit, the physical attacks on their persons or property and the vulgar desacralization of the material effects of their sacramental authority might plausibly suggest that massive numbers of lay people were either utterly ignorant of the late medieval Decalogue tradition or resoundingly rejected it.⁴¹ Yet the issue is not so simple.

First, close comparative analysis of the early Reformation has yielded a general consensus that the attack on the traditional faith was vigorously promoted by only a small percentage of the general population, perhaps ten percent, of whom even a smaller percentage demonstrated a particular, biblically-infused antipathy toward images. In Zurich and its surrounding villages, for example, such attacks were generally carried out by very small groups of fewer than a dozen.⁴²

Second, even contemporaries recognized that the motives of the iconoclasts were dictated by factors other than theology alone. In Livonia, for instance, severe riots followed the sermons of lay preacher Melchior Hoffmann († c. 1543)

40 Geiler, *Der dreieckecht Spiegel* (as in note 10) Cc(r) ll. 16–21.

41 For an overview see Cameron E., *The European Reformation* (Oxford: 1991) 226–234.

42 Ibid., 239–251; see also Gordon, *The Swiss Reformation* 63f.

on *Exodus* 20. During those riots, class and ethnic tensions were understood to have played a major role, as crowds made up primarily of poor marginalized Livonians (Poles, Estonians, Finns) pulled down and destroyed 'idols' that were also the material markers of colonizing and privileged ethnic Germans.⁴³

Third, popular attacks on images were in fact the exception. The dismantling of the cult was generally carried out by legislative fiat in an orderly and careful manner; in many instances donors were allowed to rescue and retain sacred objects, or to sell or donate them to neighbouring Catholic territories where they would still be revered. Furthermore, as Eamon Duffy's work on England has shown, there is ample evidence of loyal Catholic lay communities reverently hiding their sacred objects from detection.⁴⁴ All of these factors complicate the question of success or failure.

Similar problems arise when we assess the role of anticlericalism in the emergence of the Reformation movement. A cursory glance at this topic would seem favourable to Protestantism. Luther directly attacked the late medieval Decalogue tradition by charging that the clergy had distorted divine teaching, failed to nourish their 'children' with the pure spiritual food of scripture, and thus had lost their right to the honour, obedience and respect due them under the fourth commandment:

Spirituali patres sunt, qui nos docent ante omnia mandatis dei obedire, parentibus subdi, proximis servire, sicut Apostoli fecerunt. Ipsi vero cum andverus haec doceant [...] spirituales patres sunt, sed secundum spiritum erroris, de quo Paulus praedixit iTim.iii "attendentes spiritibus erroris".

Spiritual fathers are those who teach us to obey the Commandments of God before all else, to be subject to parents, and to serve one's neighbour, just as the Apostles did. But because they teach in a manner contrary to these principles [...] they are only spiritual fathers in the sense that Paul prophesied when he said that men would fall from faith and give heed to the spirit of error.⁴⁵

43 On Hoffmann and the iconoclastic movement in Livonia see the outstanding study: Depperman K., *Melchior Hoffmann. Social Unrest and Apocalyptic Visions in the Age of the Reformation*, trans. Malcolm Wren (Edinburgh: 1987 [*Melchior Hoffmann: Soziale Unruhen und apokalyptische Visionen im Zeitalter der Reformation*. Göttingen: 1979]) 35–88.

44 Duffy E., *The Stripping of the Altars. Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580*, second edition (New Haven: 2005).

45 *De Votis Monasticis Martini Lutheri Iudicium*, WA VIII 627, ll. 8–12.

Luther's Evangelical contemporaries followed his lead. Of more than thirty Protestant catechisms that appeared in the 1520s, all but four dropped the directive to Honour your Spiritual Fathers from their exposition of the fourth commandment.⁴⁶

By the end of that decade, however, Protestants felt compelled to reverse course. The change was caused by lay resistance to the 'new' clergy, which manifested itself in a variety of forms: refusal to pay the tithe; refusal to address pastors and other church officials with honorific titles; refusal to attend public worship; determined commitment to congregational autonomy in the face of an unmistakable drift toward a state system that replaced bishops with centralized, politically-powerful boards of controllers. In this climate, Luther and his associates, who had so ably fanned the hostility of the common people against the old Catholic clergy, increasingly found themselves on the receiving end of similar treatment.⁴⁷ With anger, Luther recalled being mocked and heckled on a 1527 preaching tour to rural parishes noted for their refusal to pay the tithe: 'How can you pay your farmhands and neglect your pastors?', he had asked? 'We *need* our farmhands', came the laconic reply.⁴⁸ In Nuremberg, Andreas Osiander was mocked during the Lenten Carnival for attempting to reintroduce mandatory auricular confession: citizens pulled a wagon where a man dressed as Osiander leapt for a giant key—here a symbol for absolution—dangled just out of his reach. In Augsburg, the Lutheran pastor Urbanus Rhegius preached to a dwindling (if well-to-do) congregation while working-class layfolk organized their own clandestine house-churches free from ecclesiastical control.⁴⁹

Protestant pastors, now confronting the very challenges to clerical authority that they had encouraged against the old priesthood, found themselves in need of arguments to bolster their position vis-à-vis the laity. But to simply reiterate the old anti-Donatist formulas, which made so much of the priestly power of transubstantiation, would have been theologically awkward at the very least. A solution was found eventually by reviving the claim to spiritual paternity under the fourth commandment, but shifting the emphasis to stress the authority conferred by biblical preaching—which could be taken as a shrewd

46 Bast, *Honor Your Fathers* 131, with documentation in note 71.

47 The developments sketched in this paragraph are traced in greater detail in Bast, *Honor your Fathers* 131–140, with further documentation there.

48 Cf. *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Abteilung Tischreden*, 6 vols. (Weimar, 1912–21) IV 4002; 5503.

49 Van Amberg J., *A Real Presence. Religious and Social Dynamics of the Eucharistic Conflicts in Early Modern Augsburg, 1520–1530* (Leiden – Boston: 2012) 89–100.

Protestant innovation, had not Dinkova-Bruun alerted us to the thirteenth-century precedent.⁵⁰ In any case, the first authorized 'Lutheran' catechism in Electoral Saxony set a standard that would be widely copied: pastors were to regularly preach the Ten Commandments, and the laity taught to 'honour the office of the priesthood, which ministers to us with the Word of God', with I *Timothy* 5:17 serving as the proof-text: 'Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour.' Thereafter this exposition became normative.⁵¹

It had never stopped being so in the Catholic territories. Johannes Eck's 1539 Decalogue sermons employed the same lessons:

Dann du lieber Christ du tharfst nit die person an sehen / ob der Papst hochfertig / dein Bishoff geitig / dein pfarrherr truncken ist / sondern den hohen statt dareinn er von Gott gesetzt: das ampt bedenck / die würde / die ehr darmit Gott sie gewürdigt hat: und soll nicht anders gerechnet werden dann für ain bekanntnus / zeugknus / der ehr / des der geehrt würdt / das ist Gott selber. Darumb ... spricht er: Wer euch veracht / der veracht mich: und wer mich veracht / veracht den der mich gesandt hat.

It is none of your concern, dear Christian, if the Pope is proud, your bishop greedy, or your priest a drunkard. Do not consider the person, but the high estate in which God has set the clergy. Think of the office, the worthiness and honour with which God has graced it. In recognition of this honour you should regard the clergy as God himself. For ... as Christ said, 'he who scorns you, scorns Him who sent me'.⁵²

Across the divide of time and confession, then, clergy of whatever stripe found themselves applying the same lessons to the laity: the office of the clergy merits honour and support, due to its sacramental power over Word or Eucharist. By virtue of this power, irrespective of personal qualities, lay people were told to honour and support their clergy. Support of course could be compelled, up to a point: the tithe would continue to be mandatory for Protestants as well as for Catholics. But one suspects that honour had to be earned.

⁵⁰ See her contribution to the present volume.

⁵¹ Bast, *Honor Your Fathers* 136–137, with documentation in note 90.

⁵² Eck J., *Der Fünfft und letst Tail Christenlicher Predig von den Zehen Gebotten / wie die zuo halten / und wie die übertreten werden / Zuo wolfart den frummen Christen des alten glaubens* (Ingolstadt: Georg Krapffen, 1539) 33v col. 1, 47–col. 2, 5–9.

4 Building the New Jerusalem

Few people anywhere had higher expectations of the Ten Commandments than the Evangelical leaders of the urban Reformation. In the 1520s, their victories over absentee bishops and reluctant civic magistrates filled them with exultation at the prospect of creating new godly communities, and their model was ancient Israel. Zwingli compared himself to Moses, having led the chosen people out of bondage under the pharaonic Papacy;⁵³ the south German reformers, here following Zwingli far more than Luther, self-consciously patterned themselves on the Old Testament prophets, claiming a historical and divine mandate to guide, counsel, censure, reprove and rebuke their magistrates just as Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, and Elisha had done for Israel's kings.⁵⁴ In this context—a supercessionist Covenant theology characteristic of the emerging Reformed tradition—the Ten Commandments were put to work in charters of urban morality, formally incorporated into disciplinary ordinances (*Zuchtordnungen*) meant to guarantee, at the very least, public compliance with the Law of God.⁵⁵ Martin Bucer led the way in southern Germany with the creation of ecclesiastical ordinances for Strasbourg, Esslingen, and Ulm that explicitly identified the Ten Commandments as the guidelines for civic life.⁵⁶

Just how serious they were in this endeavour became clear in the spring of 1547, when Strasbourg faced military calamity. The armies of Charles V, fresh from their victory over the Protestant military alliance in central Germany, were now moving south and settling scores. Ulm had capitulated, Württemberg had sued for peace, and in desperate isolation the Strasburgers could almost hear the drums of war. But the city's preachers had a plan. On 11 April, Bucer and his colleagues strode into City Hall and, like the prophets they so admired, berated the magistrates for their failings. Despite twenty-five years of tireless labour on behalf of the Gospel, said the preachers, Strasbourg had not improved, and the city's present crisis was nothing more than the righteous judgment of God. But the preachers knew precisely how to avert catastrophe: renew the terms of city's Covenant with the Almighty, suppress the public sins that offended his

53 Bast R., "Constructing Protestant Identity: The Pastor as Prophet in Reformation Zurich" in Litz G. – Munzert, H. – Liebenberg R. (eds.), *Frömmigkeit—Theologie—Frömmigkeitstheologie. Contributions to European Church History. Festschrift für Berndt Hamm* (Leiden – Boston: 2005) 351–362.

54 Bast, *Honor Your Fathers* 204–226.

55 Ibid., 182–185; 217, 224, 227. On the broader social and historical context, see: Hsia R., *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550–1750* (London: 1992).

56 See Greschat, *Martin Bucer* 116f; 143–163. Texts and commentary in *BDS* XVII 186–203.

majesty, and God himself would rescue Strasbourg.⁵⁷ To that end the pastors began with a history lesson from *Deuteronomy* 28:

Es hat ja der Allmechtig ewig Gott durch den Mosen also gezüget synem volckh—das nun wir syn sollen—[...]

When Almighty eternal God called together his chosen people—*who we now are supposed to be*—he testified to them through Moses [...]⁵⁸

Then comes the familiar list of blessings and curses that we have encountered before, drawn directly from *Deuteronomy* 28,⁵⁹ with emphasis placed upon the ultimate fate of any collective that scorns God's Law: defeat at the hands of the enemy.⁶⁰ The present crisis, argued the pastors, resulted from the failure of Strasbourg's people to uphold their side of the Covenant. The pastors enumerated the city's transgressions against the Ten Commandments: false doctrine and indifference to the true faith, blasphemy and cursing, Sabbath-breaking, idle, defiant children, sexual immorality and drunkenness, robbery and usury, slander against the pastors and the magistrates themselves. To redress these ills, Bucer and his colleagues proposed a public renewal of the Covenant with God and a new commitment by the magistrates to enforce civic moral ordinances, henceforth brought into conformity with biblical law to the closest extent possible. Helpfully, the pastors pointed out how many transgressions rampant in Strasbourg—blasphemy, Sabbath-breaking, disobedience to parents, adultery—would merit death by stoning in ancient Israel.⁶¹

But the Council was unmoved. The pastors were shown the door, the city humbled itself before the emperor's army, and the magistrates brokered a compromise that preserved some elements of Protestantism in two churches while restoring the old faith in the rest. Bucer fled into exile in England, fulminating against the magistrates for the ruin of the Strasbourg church.⁶²

Yet it would be a mistake to accept at face value Bucer's diagnosis of failure. Across long centuries, men like Marquard, Geiler, and Bucer himself had laboured for the reform of Strasbourg, all of them aiming very high in their efforts

57 Published as *Wegen abschaffung grober Laster und auffrichtung gueter ordnung und discipline*, BDS XVII 207–244.

58 Ibid., 211, ll. 9–11, with my emphasis.

59 See note 16 above.

60 *Wegen abschaffung grober Laster*, BDS XVII 211–214.

61 Ibid., 239–243.

62 Greschat, *Martin Bucer* 224.

to construct a godly community wherein the Ten Commandments would serve both instrumentally and symbolically as the standard of moral conduct expected of God's chosen people. It was perhaps typical of such men, principled moralists all, to be more sensitive to failure than success, to see in their city the image of Babylon rather than Jerusalem.

Nonetheless, in an age marked by contentious, violent conflicts over religious life, the magistrates and people of Strasbourg demonstrated a remarkable set of values. Strasbourg's leading politician, the Protestant-leaning Jacob Sturm, refused to countenance the abolition of the Mass until quite late (1529), and then less out of conviction than for the sake of political survival. Nor would he and his fellow councillors permit the eviction of the nuns from Strasbourg's most influential convent.⁶³ Sturm rebuffed the preachers' outrage at this coddling of local Catholics with the observation that 'Both sides are Christian, may God have mercy'.⁶⁴ Civic policies long made the city a haven for the persecuted and dispossessed. Its liberal tradition of granting basic citizenship rights cheaply and easily made it a magnet for immigrants: in the 1520s–1530s, an average of seventy-five per year, with a high of 485 in 1528.⁶⁵ In the midst of the terrible famine of that same time, magistrates sold grain to the needy far below market price and gave it away gratis to the penniless. Able-bodied refugees to Strasbourg received food and lodging in exchange for work on the city's walls. Women, children and the elderly were lodged in the Franciscan priory at no cost: in 1530, 2,500 of them received such support for three full months. Itinerant travellers got food and a bed for one night free of charge, and were sent on their way in the morning with a small travelling allowance—18,000 of them did so in 1529.⁶⁶ When imperial legislation demanded the arrest and execution of Anabaptists, Strasbourg bowed to pressure and passed frightful laws that threatened such dissidents with mutilation and death—threats never enforced, as exile became the most severe penalty the city would countenance in practice. 'Where elsewhere a man would be hanged', said Sebastian Franck, 'in Strasbourg he will only be birched'.⁶⁷ These were not perhaps the signs of

63 For the long history of the struggle between convent, council and evangelical clergy see: Leonard A., *Nails in the Wall. Catholic Nuns in Reformation Germany* (Chicago: 2005) 59–84.

64 Brady Jr. T.A., *The Politics of the Reformation in Germany. Jacob Sturm (1489–1553)* (New Jersey: 1997) 87.

65 Deppermann, *Melchior Hoffman* 164–165.

66 *Ibid.*, 271–272.

67 Franck S., *Germania Chronicon* (Augsburg: 1538) 283a, cited by Deppermann, *Melchior Hoffman* 166.

virtue that would set aflutter the hearts of the local preachers, but they do suggest that generations of instruction on the Ten Commandments had indeed borne fruit amongst citizens who knew something about the love of God and neighbour.

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The Ten Commandments in the Thirteenth-Century Pastoral Manual *Qui bene presunt**

Greti Dinkova-Bruun

The proclamation of God's commandments on Mount Sinai is undoubtedly an event of great and lasting importance for both Jews and Christians. However, the significance of the episode for the Jews at the dawn of Israelite history on the one hand, and the later traditions on the other, seems significantly different. For the biblical Israelites, who were wandering through the desert in search of the Promised Land, the Decalogue appears to stand proxy for a historical event—the revelation of the Law by God to his chosen people, with whom he reinforces a mutual covenant.¹ In contrast, for later Jewish and Christian communities, temporally removed from the reality of the original law-giving event, the meaning of the Decalogue changes. The biblical Ten Commandments acquire a metaphorical meaning and begin to function as a moral code of precepts that teach how to behave as a worthy believer in the sight of God. This is especially true for Christians (both at the emergence of Christianity and in its later historical forms), who see themselves as pilgrims in this world, hoping eventually to be received into the kingdom of the heavenly Father.² Of course, the legal and the moral are not mutually exclusive, particularly in the case of God's Law, but it is simply undeniable that throughout the Christian tradition, and especially in the later Western Middle Ages, the notion that the Decalogue constitutes a set of moral imperatives becomes an essential part of Christian teaching, preaching, and spiritual guidance.

* I am grateful to Dr. Laura Napran who read and commented on an earlier draft of this article.

- 1 Markl D., "The Ten Words Revealed and Revised: The Origins of Law and Legal Hermeneutics in the Pentateuch", in idem (ed.), *The Decalogue and Its Cultural Influence* (Sheffield: 2013) 16.
- 2 For the reception of the Decalogue, see: Baixauli M.L., "The Decalogue in Western Theology from the Church Fathers to the Thirteenth Century", in Markl, *The Decalogue and Its Cultural Influence* 75–80; and Markl D., "The Decalogue in History: A Preliminary Survey of the Fields and Genres of its Reception", *Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte* (*Journal for Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Law*) 18 (2012) 279–287.

1 The *summa Qui bene presunt*

The text discussed in the present article is an ideal example of this development. It forms a part of a preacher's manual known as *Qui bene presunt*, after the opening words of 1 *Timothy* 5:17: 'Qui bene praesunt presbyteri, duplici honore digni habeantur: maxime qui laborant in verbo et doctrina' ('Priests, who rule well, should be considered worthy of double honour: especially those who labour in the word and doctrine').

The manual that opens with these auspicious words was written around 1220 by Richard of Wetheringsett in Suffolk, a student (about the year 1200) of the famous teacher of theology William de Montibus at the cathedral school in Lincoln. In addition, Richard has been hailed as the earliest identifiable chancellor of the University of Cambridge, where he seems to have served sometime between 1215 and 1232.³ The sixteenth-century English antiquary John Leland includes a highly laudatory entry on Richard in his impressive *De uiris illustribus*, wherein he also provides useful comments on the derivation of the author's name:⁴

Ricardus Legrocastrensis, alias Grantebrigensis, ab illustri aliqua functione qua in achademia usus est, studiorum felici prouentu famam et fortunam splendidam comparauit. Vivens ecclesiae ornamento fuit Anglicanae. Hanc laudem nec moriens perdidit, relicto libro egregio, cui inscriptio *Summa*, alias *Speculum ecclesiasticorum*, quo mores ministrorum ecclesiasticorum ad uitae exemplum honestae illexit, animauit, confirmauit denique. Scripsit et omiliarum opus cognitione, eruditione, pietate renidens. Memini aliquando uidisse me labellum, cui titulus *Summa magistri Richardi de Wetheringseto, cancellarii Grantabrigiensis*. Hoc mihi nisi casus indicasset, proprium scriptoris nomen prorsus ignorassem.

Richard of Leicester or of Cambridge, so called after some illustrious function which he fulfilled in that university, earned great fame and fortune through the successful results of his studies. In his lifetime he was

3 For Richard's life and work, see: Goering J., *William de Montibus (c. 1140–1213). The Schools and the Literature of Pastoral Care* (Toronto: 1992) 86–95; and Goering J., "The *Summa 'Qui bene presunt'* and Its Author", in Newhauser R.G. – Alford J.A. (eds.), *Literature and Religion in the Later Middle Ages. Philological Studies in Honor of Siegfried Wenzel* (Binghamton: 1995) 143–159.

4 Leland John, *De uiris illustribus/On Famous Men*, ed. – trans. J.P. Carley, *British Writers of the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period 1* (Toronto: 2010) 458–459, no. 253.

an ornament of the English church; nor did he lose his honour when he died, since he left behind him an outstanding book entitled *Summa*, or *Mirror of Churchmen*, in which he coaxed, encouraged, and strengthened the morals of the ministers of the church in the pattern of honest living. He also wrote a collection of homilies sparkling with learning, erudition, and piety. I remember once seeing a small book entitled the *Summa* of Master Richard Wetheringsett, chancellor of Cambridge. If it had not been for this chance, I would have been completely ignorant of the author's proper name.

Leland's often excessive praise of all things English does not seem exaggerated in this case. The *Summa* he mentions as Richard's crowning and most enduring intellectual achievement is undoubtedly the treatise *Qui bene presunt*, which indeed became one of the most popular pastoral manuals in the British Isles during the later Middle Ages. The work, composed in response to the Fourth Lateran Council's concern for establishing official standards of religious instruction, is still found in sixty-three medieval manuscripts, which contain two distinct versions, that is, a shorter original and a subsequent expanded revision. Despite its crucial importance for the development of the genre of pastoral literature in medieval England, the treatise remains unedited, with the exception of some representative excerpts published by Fritz Kemmler in 1984 and Joseph Goering in 1992 and 1995.⁵

This limited interest is unwarranted. The *Qui bene presunt* is the first pastoral manual that identifies in a programmatic manner twelve topics, which the preacher himself had to master before preaching them in public. These topics, enumerated by Richard in the prologue to the treatise and presented afterwards as separate *distinctiones*, include the creed with its twelve articles of faith, the Lord's Prayer, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the virtues, the vices, the seven sacraments, the two evangelical precepts about loving God and one's neighbour, the Ten Commandments, the rewards of heaven and the pains of hell, the things in which people err, the things that must be avoided, and finally the things that need to be done.⁶

5 See Kemmler F., 'Exempla' in Context. A Historical Study of Robert Mannyng of Brunne's 'Handlyng Synne' (Tübingen: 1984) 46–67. For Goering's publications, see above, n. 3.

6 Kemmler, 'Exempla' in Context 48–49 (transl. p. 209); and Goering, *William de Montibus* 89–90.

The important place of the *Qui bene presunt* among other English pastoral manuals such as those written by Edmund of Abingdon (1175–1240)⁷ and Robert Grosseteste (1175–1253),⁸ will not be discussed here, nor its profound influence on thirteenth-century English synodal legislation about preaching.⁹ Instead, this article will concentrate on the eighth distinction of Richard's *summa* entitled "De decem preceptis", which is the section pertaining most closely to the theme of this volume.

2 The *Qui bene presunt* and the Decalogue

The Ten Commandments are first mentioned among the topics suitable for preaching in the prologue of the *Qui bene presunt*, where Richard enumerates them in the following manner:

Predicanda sunt decem moralia mandata legis, que sunt de uno Deo colendo, nomen Dei non in uanum sumendo, sabbatis, id est festis, obseruandis, parentibus honorandis, non occidendo, non mechando, non furtum faciendo, non falsum testimonium perhibendo, non concupiscendo uxorem uel ancillam, uel aliquam rem proximi.¹⁰

The ten moral commandments of the Law ought to be preached, namely, those about worshipping the one and only God, not taking the name of God in vain, keeping the Sabbath days (that is, the feast days), honouring your parents, not killing, not committing adultery, not stealing, not bearing false witness, not coveting the wife or handmaid or anything else of your neighbour's.

The same enumeration and ordering are then exemplified by four verses borrowed from Peter Riga's *Aurora* and placed at the beginning of the *distinctio* that discusses the meaning of the commandments:

7 Edmund's manual *Speculum ecclesie* was probably written in 1213–1214 at Merton Abbey (see *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (*DNB*): <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8503>).

8 Grosseteste's manual *Templum Dei* was composed ca. 1220–1230. For the edition of the text, see: Grosseteste Robert, *Templum Dei*, ed. J. Goering – F. Mantello (Toronto: 1984).

9 Goering, *William de Montibus* 90–93; Goering, "The *Summa 'Qui bene presunt'*" 145–146.

10 Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 3471, fol. 125r.

Sperne deos, fugito periuria, sabbata serua;
 Sit tibi patris honor, sit tibi matris amor;
 Non sis occisor, mechus, fur, testis iniquus,
 Vicinique thorum, resque caueto suas.¹¹

Reject the deities, avoid swearing false oaths, observe the Sabbath;
 you should have respect for your father and love for your mother;
 you should not be a killer, adulterer, thief, and an unjust witness;
 you should keep clear of your neighbour's bed and possessions.

Two important elements in these lists become immediately apparent. First, the text in the prologue explicitly calls the Ten Commandments *moralia mandata*, an expression that sets the tone for Richard's entire exposition on the Decalogue; and second, both lists reveal that Richard is following Augustine's argument for the division and ordering of the commandments, developed in his *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum*¹² and afterwards repeated verbatim in the *Glossa ordinaria*.¹³ To be fair, the *Glossa* also includes the competing view of Origen, but in reality, the Augustinian paradigm holds supremacy in Western theology and exegesis. In contrast to Origen, Augustine argues for three precepts regarding God and seven regarding man, a division that combines in the same commandment the imperative of exclusive worship of the one God and the prohibition against idols. Furthermore, he divides into two commandments the proscription against coveting one's neighbour's wife and goods, which for Origen simply represent two different aspects of the same precept. In separating the wife of the neighbour from his possessions and in placing the woman before the material goods in the order of the Decalogue, Augustine follows the wording of *Deuteronomy* 5 rather than that of *Exodus* 20. Although minor, this change introduced in *Deuteronomy* suggests a more nuanced understanding of the dignity of womanhood, a sense that was likely more appealing to the Christian sensibilities of Augustine and his time.

The distinction of the *Qui bene presunt* on the Decalogue is organized in a manner perfectly exemplifying Richard's working method, which exhibits

11 Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 3471, fol. 156r. The text is printed in *Aurora: Petri Rigae Biblia versificata*, ed. P. Beichner, 2 vols. (Notre Dame: 1965) 1 106: Liber Exodus, vv. 377–380.

12 *Aurelii Augustini Quaestionum in Heptateuchum libri VII*, ed. I. Fraipont, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 33 (Turnhout: 1958) *Quaestiones Exodi*, LXXI 1–2, 102–103.

13 See 'Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria': *Facsimile Reprint of the 'Editio Princeps'*, Adolph Rusch of Strassburg 1480/1481 (Turnhout: 1992) 1.

characteristics typical of the classroom of William de Montibus in Lincoln. The most obvious connection between the two authors is Richard's skilful incorporation of short mnemonic verses into his manual, which serve as poetic summaries of the topics already considered in the prose sections either preceding or following them. In both cases, whether concluding or initiating a discussion, the verses fulfil the role of textual anchors organizing the prose exposition. This way of arranging material around a poetic mnemonic centre is a landmark of the training Richard must have received during his studies at Lincoln.

A further and even more concrete connection between Richard and his teacher William is Richard's borrowing of a number of *versus memoriales* from William's large poetic compilation the *Versarius*. In the section on the Ten Commandments this happens as many as nine times for a total of fifteen verses, and on one occasion in the fourth commandment Richard even quotes William's verses stating: 'sic docuit Cancellarius Lincolnienensis' ('so taught the Chancellor of Lincoln'). Considering this close connection between master and pupil, it is somewhat surprising that Richard did not use William's verses to introduce the Decalogue as a whole,¹⁴ but preferred to excerpt Peter Riga's

14 William's verses are found in his *Versarius* under the title *Decalogus*. See Goering, *William de Montibus* 415, no. 313, where only the first verse is printed. The full text is transcribed from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 186, fol. 40v; it reads:

Sperne deos, non periures, requies celebretur;
Omne genus gentis, tibi sanguinis auctor ametur;
Desine mechari, ne sis homicida malignus;
Non furtum facias, sis in testando benignus;
Fratris in uxorem non te trahat ulla libido;
Illius in rebus te nesciat ulla cupido.

Reject the deities, do not perjure yourself, celebrate the day of rest;
All birth of a descendant and the creator of your blood should be loved;
Stop committing adultery, do not be an evil killer.
You should not steal and you should be kind in bearing witness.
No lust should pull you towards the wife of your brother.
And no desire for his possessions should be known to you.

Another example of this type of *versus memoriales* on the Decalogue starting with 'Disce Deum colere nomenque Dei reuerere' is found in various manuscript and poetic contexts. For an edition of this five-line poem and further references, see: Dinkova-Bruun G., "Medieval Latin Poetic Anthologies (vii): The Biblical Anthology from York Minster Library (Ms. XVI Q 14)", *Mediaeval Studies* 64 (2002) 61–110, esp. 81 (no. 12); and eadem, "Notes on Poetic Composition in the Theological Schools ca. 1200 and the Latin Poetic Anthology from Ms. Harley 956: A Critical Edition", *Sacris Erudiri* 43 (2004) 299–391, esp.

Aurora instead. However, it should be acknowledged that Riga's masterpiece is a natural source for poetic borrowings, and that Richard was not the only author using the *Aurora* as a poetic repository.¹⁵ Thus, in addition to the four verses on the Decalogue, Richard used under the rubric 'Quod decem precepta opponuntur decem plagis' ('The ten precepts are contrasted by the ten plagues') twelve more lines which are associated with Riga's *Liber Exodus* but which might have not been composed by Riga himself.¹⁶ Finally, as many as ten verses in this distinction of the *summa* have not been previously attested and were probably composed by Richard himself. The situation in the remaining distinctions might be different from that seen in the Decalogue, but Richard's use of poetic sources is still well exemplified in this section of the treatise. As for the prose authorities incorporated by Richard, some are explicitly named, such as Isidore in the introduction, Bede in the second commandment, Origen in the third, Augustine in the third, eighth and tenth, Gregory the Great in the fifth and sixth, and the Ordinary Gloss called *Glosa* or *interlinearis* in the sixth, seventh and eighth. Further cited passages are introduced with expressions such as 'ibi dicit expositor', 'dicit etiam auctoritas' or simply 'dicitur' which can be identified as borrowed mostly from Augustine, Ambrose, Bede, Peter Lombard, and William de Montibus. As a final comment on Richard's sources, it should be mentioned that the text of his treatise is unsurprisingly peppered with biblical quotations and scriptural examples, used as theological scaffolding for the arguments presented. Overall, the use of prose sources in the *Qui bene presunt* is both traditional as far as their selection, and original as far as their organization in the new context of a manual of pastoral care. The truly innovative aspect of the work, however, is undoubtedly the seamless incorporation of the mnemonic verses into the fabric of the text, which truly transforms it into a didactic handbook for the early thirteenth-century clergy.

Let us turn now to a more detailed discussion of Richard's Decalogue, focusing on Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 3471. Three reasons justify this choice of manuscript: first, the codex was written in ca. 1260, making it one of the early witnesses of the text; second, it contains the original short version of the treatise;¹⁷ and third, it attributes the *Qui bene presunt* to Richard and

352 (no. 100). Interestingly, this piece and one further poem on the same theme were added by two different later hands in the lower margin of one of the manuscripts preserving William de Montibus's *Versarius* (see Cambridge, CCC, MS 186, fol. 98v).

15 See *Aurora*, ed. Beichner, I xxxv–xlii.

16 See *ibidem*, I 98.

17 An example of the expanded redaction of this text is found in the late thirteenth-century manuscript London, British Library, Royal 9.A.xiv, fols. 18r–112r: 'Incipit summa magistri

refers to him as a master from Cambridge.¹⁸ This correct attribution is important, particularly because a number of witnesses confuse Richard's authorship with that of his teacher William de Montibus or fail altogether to provide an attribution.

Richard's treatment of the Ten Commandments can be outlined in the following manner, with the rubrics, added in the margins of the Cambridge manuscript, marking the major thematic divisions in the text for each commandment. The rubrics for these shorter textual units are undoubtedly introduced in order to facilitate the retrieval of information by the reader:

I. Introduction (418 words)

Quare decem sunt mandata moralia ('The reason why the number of the moral commandments is ten' + four verses from Riga, *Aurora*)¹⁹

Quod omnes tenentur ad obseruationem decem mandatorum ('Everybody is expected to observe the Ten Commandments')

Quod decem precepta opponuntur decem plagis ('The Ten Commandments are contrasted by the ten plagues' + twelve verses maybe by Riga)²⁰

II. De primo precepto ('On the first precept', 397 words)

De Deo colendo ('On the worshipping of God' + two verses from William, *Versarius: Idolatria*)²¹

Quod mundi amatores habunt deos alienos ('Those who love the world have foreign gods' + one verse from William, *Versarius: Adoratio*)

Ricardi de Wereste de hiis que pertinent ad eos qui bene presunt'. The long version adds mostly references to sources and mnemonic verses, but in some cases it also inserts further explanations and examples (see below, n. 23).

18 See Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 3471, fol. 125r: 'Incipit summa magistri R. Cancellarii de Kantebrug'. A much later hand, probably from the sixteenth century, adds in the upper margin: 'Summa sacerdotalis seu speculum ecclesiasticorum'. The initial 'Q' is inhabited by two figures, one lecturing and one listening. The distinction on the Decalogue is copied on fols. 156r–161v.

19 See above, section 2 of this article.

20 See above, n. 16.

21 Many verses from the *Versarius*, but not all, are printed in Goering, *William de Montibus* 399–471.

III. De secundo precepto ('On the second precept', 534 words)

Non assumes nomen Dei tui in uanum ('You shall not take the name of your God in vain')²²

Quibus casibus liceat iurare ('Swearing an oath is permitted in these circumstances' + two verses from William, *Versarius: Iuramentum*; and two unknown verses)²³

IV. De tercio precepto ('On the third precept', 582 words)

Obserua Sabbatum ('Observe the Sabbath')

De triplici sabbato ('On the triple Sabbath')

Quare feriatio sabbati transfertur ad diem dominicum ('Why the celebration of the Sabbath is transferred to the day of the Lord')

Quod liceat laborare in festis circa uite necessaria ('Work should be permitted on feast days if the necessity of life requires it')²⁴

22 It is worth mentioning that Richard makes a point of explaining the difference between this commandment and commandment eight 'You should not bear false witness' (see Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 3471, fol. 157r).

23 In the expanded version of the *Qui bene presunt* commandment two was enlarged with as many as 670 words dealing with the two types of *iuramentum*, i.e. *assertorium et promissorium* or 'assertory and promissory', and the various ways in which the oaths can be broken or considered invalid. Furthermore, the added text deals with some potentially confusing questions, such as, whether it is a greater purgery to swear by God than to swear by the Gospel, or whether swearing by God can be considered a greater oath than swearing by any of his *membra* (see London, British Library, Royal 9.A.XIV, fols. 94v–95r).

24 This is a noteworthy section that deserves to be reproduced in its entirety: 'Ex quibus potest connici non esse graue delictum aliquando, magna ingruente necessitate, in festis laborare circa uite necessaria, dummodo sine scandalo, cupiditate et consuetudine. A cuiusmodi delictis non sunt immunes in festis negociantes et cetera que premittuntur exercentes. Solet et sic exponi: *Non facietis opus seruile* in sabbato, idest *opus*, pro mercede et huiusmodi rusticana opera rustice; *seruile*, scilicet quod faciat seruum, idest peccatum, et sic cotidie est sabbatizandum. Possunt tamen licite scolares in festis psalmis, sermonibus et sequenciis scribendis, dummodo sine mercede temporali, intendere' ('From these arguments it can be inferred that it is not a serious transgression, if sometimes, out of pressing need, one works on feast days to obtain the necessities of life, as long as this is done without offence, cupidity, and habit. Not exempt from such transgressions are those who trade on feast days or do the things mentioned before. Usually this is explained thus: "You shall do no servile work" in the Sabbath [*Lev. 23; Num. 28–29*]: "work" means "for a pay" as well as rural toils done in rustic manner; "servile" signifies that which creates a servant, that is, a sin; and thus one needs to observe the Sabbath every day. However, during feast days scholars can legitimately apply themselves to the writing of psalms, sermons, and sequences, as long as they do this without temporal reward').

v. De quarto precepto ('On the fourth precept', 967 words)

Honora patrem et matrem ('Honour your father and your mother')

Quid nati debeant parentibus et parentes natis ('What the children owe to their parents and what the parents to their children' + two verses from William, *Versarius: Quid parens proli debeat* and *Quid proles parenti*)

Quomodo pater multipliciter dicitur ('On the multiple meaning of the word father' + two verses from William, *Versarius: Pater*)

Quod prelati dicunt patres ('Prelates are called fathers')

De officio prelatorum ('On the office of the prelates' + two unknown verses)

vi. De quinto precepto ('On the fifth precept', 580 words)

Non occides ('You shall not kill')

De multiplici homicidio ('On killing repeatedly' + four unknown verses)

vii. De sexto precepto ('On the sixth precept', 866 words)

Non mechaberis ('You shall not commit adultery')

Fornicacio, immundicia, libido ('Fornication, uncleanness, lust' + two verses from William, *Versarius: Qualis debeat esse uxor* and *Mandata temporalia*)

De duplici mechia: Spiritualis; Corporalis ('On the twofold adultery: spiritual and corporal')

Que sequuntur ex adulterio ('The consequences of adultery' + two unknown verses)

viii. De septimo precepto ('On the seventh precept', 649 words)

Non furtum facies ('You shall not steal')

Qui sunt fures ('Who is called a thief')

Quod luxuriosi se ipsos furantur ('The lovers of luxury steal from themselves')

ix. De octauo precepto ('On the eighth precept', 771 words)

Non falsum testimonium dices ('You shall not bear false witness')

Quod sunt octo genera periurii ('There are eight types of perjury')

De mendacio multiplici ('On lying repeatedly')

Qui repelluntur a testimonio ('Who is not allowed to bear witness' + two verses from William, *Versarius: Testis* and two unknown verses)

Quod ualde grauandi sunt falsi testes ('False witnesses should be made to suffer intensely')

x. De nono precepto ('On the ninth precept', 42 words)

Non concupisces domum proximi tui ('You shall not covet the house of your neighbour')

xi. De decimo precepto ('On the tenth precept', 140 words)

Non desiderabis uxorem proximi tui ('You shall not desire the wife of your neighbour')

This list of contents makes it immediately apparent that the treatment of commandment four, 'Honour your father and mother', is by far the longest, including also a number of mnemonic verses, mostly from William de Montibus's *Versarius*. Conversely, commandments nine and ten on not coveting your neighbour's wife and possessions are afforded minimal discussion in addition to being left without poetic support. Other commandments that lack mnemonic verses are three 'Observe the Sabbath' and seven 'You shall not steal'. In the expanded redaction of the *summa* some verses are added to the seventh commandment; however, the ninth and tenth commandments, as well as the third, remain without poetic content even in the longer version. There is no immediate explanation for this textual reality.

3 The Fourth Commandment: 'Honour your Father and your Mother'

Although the prominence of the fourth commandment seems at first surprising, even a quick perusal of the arguments advanced here reveals its central place not only in the Decalogue narrative, but also in the entire *Qui bene presunt*. In general, the importance of the fourth commandment derives from its position as the first of the mandates to deal with interrelationships among the recipients of the Law. The commandment to honour your father and mother can be seen to parallel the first commandment, which opens the entire Decalogue and regulates the relationship between the believer and God.

In addition, as Richard does not fail to observe himself, the fourth commandment is unique among the *mandata* recorded on the second tablet, because it contains a divine promise: 'Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you' (*Ex.* 20:12). Richard draws the reader's attention to the importance of caring for one's parents by incorporating the only non-biblical narrative *exemplum* in the entire treatise.²⁵ The story concerns a boy who asks his father for an old cloth

²⁵ For the Latin text of this passage and all subsequent passages referring to the fourth commandment, see the Appendix to this article.

with which to cover his grandfather who has been banished from the living quarters of the family because of his old age. After he receives the cloth he tells his father: 'This cloth will be cut in two and one half will be kept for you, father, for when you become an old man'. The famous folk story of the ungrateful son, a variation of which is found in the sermons of Jacques de Vitry († 1240) amongst many other sources, is a perfect way to teach the moral precepts of filial piety, gratitude, and respect.²⁶ Richard uses this memorable *exemplum* to full advantage since, after showing his readers that a long and happy life depends on how well one treats one's parents, he broadens the original meaning of the commandment by declaring that every *prelatus* should be seen as the spiritual *pater* of his people. They must honour and provide for him in the same way they take care of their biological parents. However, the most important payment, which the spiritual father can receive from his sons, is the satisfaction that his didactic efforts have been successful. In Richard's own words:

Truly and deservedly the prelates, who undertake the duty of begetting in faith and nurturing in morals, can be called fathers, about whom Paul says: 'I became your father through the Gospel' (1 Cor. 4:15). If they 'rule well, they are worthy of double honour', as Paul says to Timothy (1 Tim. 5:17), that is, they are worthy of respect and support, from which follows that they are due payments and tithes apart from the other precepts in the law about giving tithes.²⁷ In this precept of the Decalogue, to give tithes means to become instructed, which is seen in the words of Ecclesiasticus: 'Honour God with all your soul, and revere the priests' (Ecclesiasticus 7:33).

It is true that the link between prelate and father is included in a long passage dedicated to the multivalent significance of the Latin word *pater*, which, in addition to its connection to *prelatus*, can be understood to refer to God and the angels, the abbot and the godfather, Adam and Hiram, and even the town's mayor and the devil. Still, the fact that the fourth commandment is the only place in the entire *Qui bene presunt* where the opening quotation from Paul's first letter to Timothy is quoted again, further strengthens the impression that this section of the *summa* is considered particularly important.

26 *The Exempla or Illustrative Stories from the Sermones vulgares of Jacques de Vitry*, ed. T.F. Crane with introduction, analysis, and notes (New York: 1890; repr. ed. New York: 1971) no. CCLXXXVIII, 121 (Latin text) and 260 (English translation and further references).

27 Richard is referring here to Distinction 10 "De erroribus laicorum", where he includes a long discussion on the paying of tithes (see Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 3471, fols. 164v–165v).

One further noteworthy element in this section of the treatise are Richard's disparaging comments on contemporary city officials: he calls the mayor 'the father and husband of the town' and states that he deserves the highest respect for his ardent efforts on behalf of the town's inhabitants. 'But many of the mayors today', states Richard, 'can be called bursars rather than protectors, robbers rather than fathers'. A similar critique of the ruling elite is included in the fifth commandment, 'do not kill', where the author exclaims in exasperation:

Et quomodo homicide non sunt moderni principes, pauperes opprimentes, rusticos, pupillos et uiduas, et deuorant plebem Domini sicut escam panis? Contra quos Micheas: *Audite principes Iacob qui uiolenter tollitis pelles populorum desuper eos et carnes eorum desuper ossibus eorum quasi excoriantes eos, et bona eorum diripitis.*²⁸

And in what way are the present-day princes not murderers, they who oppress the poor, the peasants, the orphans, and the widows, and who devour God's people like a piece of bread? Against them Micah says: 'Listen, o rulers of Jacob, you who violently tear the skins off the people, and the flesh off their bones' (*Micah* 3:1–2), as though flaying them, and you who plunder their goods.

These acerbic remarks verging on invective underscore Richard's desire to make his treatise relevant to the problems of his own time as well as to enhance its practical usefulness, by identifying some of the social ills the *prelati* were likely to encounter while tending to their flocks. Similar remarks are bound to be found also elsewhere in the *Qui bene presunt*, once it is finally published in its entirety.

In contrast to the fourth commandment, which plays such a central role in the *summa*, commandments nine and ten are treated in a rather cursory manner. The first eight commandments, says Richard, stop the hand (*cohibent manum*), while the final two deter the soul (*animum*).²⁹ Thus, the last two

28 Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 3471, fol. 159r.

29 The text dedicated to the ninth commandment in Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 3471, fol. 161r, reads:

"Nonum preceptum: *Non concupisces domum proximi tui*, etc. [*Ex.* 20:7; *Deut.* 5:21]. Octo precedencia precepta manum cohibent, duo sequencia animum. Ex quo potest argui quod in Euuangelio nulla est preceptorum addicio, etsi uideatur, cum dicat Christus: *Qui uiderit mulierem ad concupiscendam eam*, etc. [*Mt.* 5:28] ('The ninth precept: *You shall not covet the house of your neighbour*, etc. [*Ex.* 20:7; *Deut.* 5:21]. The eight preceding precepts stop the hand, the two following them [deter] the soul. From which it can be argued

commandments are concerned with the concept of *concupiscentia*, but since desiring something also leads to adultery and theft, already prohibited in commandments six and seven, it is likely that this is the reason why Richard felt it sufficient simply to distinguish between carnal and spiritual coveting without further elaboration. Another possible explanation might be that since commandment nine in reality prohibits lust, while commandment ten does the same for avarice—two sins to which Richard dedicates a comprehensive discussion in Distinction 5 “De uiciis” of his *summa*—no further argument was necessary here. Of course, this suggestion presupposes that the medieval reader was able to identify these internal connections for himself in the same way we can which, it should be assumed, he could.

4 Conclusions

In conclusion, it is worth considering the question of why the *summa Qui bene presunt* became such a landmark of didactic religious literature in the medieval period. The topics it treats are not really new, but the way they are presented reflects a novel approach to pastoral education with a strong commitment to producing a useful and practical guide for members of the clergy, both in their own studies and in their duties as preachers. Thus, the usefulness of Richard's handbook can be seen, first, in its logical organization which facilitates learning and referencing; second, in the presence of *versus memoriales* to aid memorization of the main points in the argument; third, in the author's effort to point out and elucidate various aspects of the material, especially in the cases where he provides internal cross references to explain the potentially confusing meaning of the text;³⁰ and finally, in the inclusion of practical advice on controversial issues which must have been invaluable to the clergy in their day-to-day activities.³¹ Thus the *Qui bene presunt* is a pastoral manual that attends to the moral improvement, education, and daily life of those who, in turn, would help others to perfect their own moral principles. In this its impact was indeed immeasurable.

that, even though it might seem so, there is no adding of precepts in the Gospel when Christ says: *He who looks at a woman with lust, etc. [Mt. 5:28]'*".

30 See above, nn. 22 and 27.

31 See above, n. 24.

Appendix

This appendix presents a preliminary edition of Richard of Wetheringsett's text on the fourth commandment from Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 3471 (ca. 1260), fols. 157v–158v, which is assigned the *siglum* A. The edited text deviates from A only in a few cases where an error has been identified. In these instances the alternative readings found in manuscripts Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 118 (saec. XIII), fols. 44va–47va (= P) or Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS 15 (F.4.15, saec. XIII), fols. 77v–79v (= M) have been adopted. However, at this stage it is premature to talk about the relationship between any of the manuscripts.

De quarto precepto.

Quantum preceptum est: *Honora patrem et matrem*,³² etc. Quod intelligendum est tam de carnalibus || (fol. 158r) quam de spiritualibus. Ad litteram parentes carnales debemus reuereri et sustentare quod quidem³³ est honorare. Vnde Paulus: *Honora uiduas*, idest sustenta, *que uere uidue sunt*,³⁴ non despiciere, deridere, maledicere, uel dampnificare. Vnde Salomon in Prouerbis: *Oculum qui subsannat patrem et qui despicit partum matris suffodiant eum corui de torrentibus*,³⁵ idest demones. Et qui maledixerit patri uel matri, morte moriatur. Terreat exemplum Cham qui patrem derisit: eius posteritatem seruituti addixit paterna maledictio.³⁶ Et Parabole: *Qui subtrahit aliquid patri aut matri et dicit hoc non esse peccatum, particeps homicide est*.³⁷ Quod specialiter intelligendum est de illis qui similes sunt scribis et phariseis qui parentibus corban dixerunt et occasiones inuenerunt, quibus auariciam suam palliarent et parentibus non subuenirent. Qui etiam cuiusmodi confundi³⁸ possunt per cyconias et rapaces uolucres qui suos alunt parentes.

Quid nati debeant parentibus et parentes natis.

Quid enim debeant nati parentibus et parentes natis sic retine:

32 Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16.

33 quidem] quidam A a.c.

34 1 Tim. 5:3.

35 Prov. 30:17 (effodiant Vulg.).

36 Cf. Gen. 9:25.

37 Prov. 28:24.

38 confundi] A add. in marg.

Educo, corripio, doceo natam mihi prolem.³⁹

Exhibeo, ueneror illi parendo parentem.⁴⁰

Et bene primum mandatum in secunda tabula ad pietatis officium erga parentes, a quibus originem sumimus, nos inuitat; qui enim parentibus non obedit, quibus perebit. Et Paulus: *Qui curam suorum non habet et maxime domesticorum, infideli est deterior.*⁴¹ Et bene pre aliis preceptis istud solum de decem promissionem habet subiunctam, subdit enim *ut sis*⁴² *longeuus super terram.*⁴³ Et bene, ut respondeat merces merito, quia parentes cum longevi sint, maxime egent honore. Et si tunc honoraueris eos, longeuus eris ad litteram super terram et bene sit tibi in futuro. Et competit quod dicit Paulus: Pietas ualet ad *promissionem uite que nunc est et future.*⁴⁴ Pium est etiam quod narratur de puero quodam qui cum requisitus ab auo suo remoto a thalamo retro hostium propter inquietacionem filii sui et uxoris sue per multa incommoda, que senes circumueniunt, impetrasset a patre suo ueterem saccum ad auum suum tegendum. Respondit patri suo: 'Scindatur saccus et tibi pater reseruetur medietas quousque tu senueris'.

Mistice uero intelligendum est quod in Deuteronomio legitur quod⁴⁵ eadem promissio subiuncta inuenienti nidum in arbore uel terra, pullos⁴⁶ sumenti et matrem abire permittenti,⁴⁷ ut scilicet scriptura spiritualiter intelligatur et non carnaliter. Nidus enim scriptura est. In terra nidus inuenitur, quando de carnalibus loquitur, in arbore quando de celestibus. Mater uero est sensus litteralis, pulli sensus spiritualis qui sumuntur, quando sensui spirituali indulgetur. Tobias ualde commendatur de honore parentum,⁴⁸ similiter et Booz qui parentes honorauit.⁴⁹ Quod uero in euangelio⁵⁰ premissis uidetur contrarium, scilicet qui *non*⁵¹ *odit patrem et matrem* etc.,⁵² non scilicet

39 William de Montibus, *Versarius*: 'Quid parens proli debeat' (Goering, *William de Montibus* 448, no. 959).

40 William de Montibus, *Versarius*: 'Quid proles parenti' (Goering, *William de Montibus* 448, no. 960).

41 1 *Tim.* 5:8.

42 sis] sit *A a.c.*

43 *Ex.* 20:12.

44 1 *Tim.* 4:8.

45 quod *P: om. AM.*

46 pullos] pollos *A a.c.*

47 Cf. *Deut.* 22:6.

48 Cf. *Tob.* 11.

49 Cf. *Ruth* 4.

50 euangelio] euuungelio *A a.c.*

51 non *P: om. AM.*

52 Cf. *Luke* 14:26.

quod sunt, sed in itinere Dei si nobis obsistunt, idest uicia, non naturam. Et sic doce-mur carnalem affectum⁵³ diuino postponere. Et sic etiam potest intelligi *qui non odit* etc., idest qui non optauerit ut finiatur lex misera generandi et nascendi.

Quomodo pater multipliciter dicitur.

Quomodo uero pater multipliciter dicatur, sic docuit Cancellarius Lincolniensis:⁵⁴

Demon, patrinus, pater est Deus, angelus, Adam
Hiram, prelatus, abbas⁵⁵ et maior in urbe.

De primo dicitur in Iohanne: *Vos ex patre diabolo estis*.⁵⁶ Hic potius uictricus quam pater. Excludendus est ab honore simul cum matre Babilonia. Hinc dicitur: *Obluiscere populum tuum et domum patris tui*.⁵⁷

Patrini sunt honorandi ut carnales quibus conferendi sunt sacerdotes penitenciarum propter uinculum spirituale, de quo Symacus papa et Silvester: 'Omnes quos in penitencia accepimus ita nostri sunt filii et filie ut suscepti in baptismo. Quorum omnium flagiciosa est commixtio'.⁵⁸

De Deo dicit Malachias: *Si ego pater uester ubi est honor meus?*⁵⁹ Qui quidem honorandus est corde credendo et colendo; ore confitendo, orando, laudando, predican-do; opere duliam et latriam exhibendo et etiam in membris suis, scilicet pauperibus. Vnde Salomon || (fol. 158v): *Honora Dominum de tua substancia et de primiciis frugum tuarum da*⁶⁰ pauperibus. Que uero sit merces huius honoris ostendit⁶¹ qui dicebat: *Quicumque honorificauerit me, glorificabo eum*.⁶² Sed de fictis dicitur: *Populus hic labiis me honorat, cor autem eorum longe est a me*.⁶³

Quod angeli sunt patres, docet Paulus ad Epheseos: *Flecto genua*⁶⁴ *ad Deum patrem Domini nostri Iesu Christi, ex quo omnis paternitas in celo et in terra nominatur*.⁶⁵

53 affectum] effectum A a.c.

54 William de Montibus, *Versarius*: 'Pater' (Goering, *William de Montibus* 445, no. 903).

55 abbas] abas A.

56 *Ioh.* 8:44.

57 *Ps.* 44:11.

58 Peter Lombard, *Sententiae*, ed. I.C. Brady, 2 vols., 3rd rev. ed. (Grottaferata: 1971–1981) Lib. IV, Dist. XLII, cap. 2,238: Qui sunt filii spirituales.

59 *Mal.* 1:6.

60 *Prov.* 3:9.

61 ostendit] ostendeit A a.c.

62 1 *Reg.* 2:30 (glorificauerit *Vulg.*).

63 *Mt.* 15:8.

64 genua] ienua A.

65 *Ephes.* 3:14–15 (genua mea; celis *Vulg.*).

Et angelis exhibendus est honor et obsequium, quia custodes nostri sunt, tutores, aduocati, patroni. Hiram etiam pater Salomonis appellatur in .ii. Paralipomenon, quia artifex ingeniosus. Et ad litteram huiusmodi sunt honorandi propter Deum, cuius opera faciunt mirifica, et propter sanctos quibus deseruiunt.

Quod prelati dicunt patres.

Prelati uero merito patres possunt appellari qui officium suscipiunt in fide generandi et moribus enutriendi, de quorum numero Paulus: *Per Euuangelium ego uos genui*.⁶⁶ Isti *si bene presunt, duplici honore digni sunt*, ut dicit Paulus ad Timotheum,⁶⁷ hoc est, reuerencia et sustentacione, unde et eis debentur oblaciones et decime, unde et preter alia precepta expressa de dandis decimis in lege. In hoc precepto decalogi, ut dentur decime precipi intelligitur, et conuenit quod dicitur in Ecclesiastico: *Honora Deum ex tota anima et honorifica sacerdotes*.⁶⁸ Et alibi in Ecclesiastico,⁶⁹ ubi multa dicuntur de honore parentum: *Qui timet Deum, honorat parentes et quasi dominis seruiet hiis qui generauerunt*⁷⁰ in opere et sermone et omni paciencia.

De officio prelatorum.

Ecce officium prelatorum ut patres censeantur,⁷¹ unde quod patres non sint, conqueritur Paulus ad Corinthios, dicens: *Si decem milia pedagogorum*⁷² *habeatis, sed non multos patres*.⁷³

Iob erat pater pauperum, Helyas erat pater, currus et auriga Israel. Pater scilicet per affectum,⁷⁴ currus per sustentacionem, auriga per discretionem. Abbas uero pater dicitur qui honorandus est ut patet in religiosis, specialiter in osculacione manus et capitis inclinacione et huiusmodi. Maior in urbe pater appellatur urbis urbisque maritus. Sic *Razias amator ciuitatis pro affectu Iudeorum pater appellatur*.⁷⁵ Et huiusmodi sunt honorandi, quia pondus et estum sustinent pro communi utilitate. Sed multi de modernis maioribus potius possunt dici dispensatores quam defensores, predones quam patres. Quibus etiam aliis honor debeatur sic potest retineri:⁷⁶

66 1 Cor. 4:15.

67 1 Tim. 5:17.

68 Ecclesiasticus 7:33.

69 Ecclesiastico P: Exodo A, eodem M.

70 Ecclesiasticus 3:8.

71 censeantur] senseantur A.

72 pedagogorum] pedagogum A.

73 1 Cor. 4:15.

74 Pater scilicet per affectum M: om. AP.

75 11 Macc. 14:37.

76 Verses not identified.

Detur prelati reuerencia, sic et honestis
Presbitero, regi, generi, ueterique scienti.

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Morals from a Mystical Cook: Jan van Leeuwen and the Ten Commandments*

Youri Desplenter

Around 1350, two Middle Dutch treatises on the Ten Commandments were written by Jan van Leeuwen, a lay brother of the Groenendaal priory of canons (near Brussels). This is a remarkable fact, not only because a single author composed two treatises on the same theme, but also because at that time the Ten Commandments had rarely, if ever, been the subject of a text in Middle Dutch (or the vernacular, for that matter). In this article, we seek to explain why Jan van Leeuwen produced two treatises on the Decalogue, and what might have inspired him to write on that theme.

Jan van Leeuwen, Lay Brother in Groenendaal

At the time when the community of Groenendaal adopted the Augustinian rule in 1350, Jan van Leeuwen already lived, worked and prayed there.¹ In 1343, the later famous Middle Dutch mystic John of Ruusbroec (1293–1381) moved from the centre of Brussels to a hermitage in the Sonian Forest with two other priests. It is presumed that Jan van Leeuwen, who was a layman, joined the still small community and immediately started working in its kitchen in 1344. What he did prior to coming to Groenendaal is uncertain. Only details of the latter part of his life, when he resided in the Groenendaal community (until his death in 1378), are known. Although Jan van Leeuwen claims in some of his

* This contribution is the abridged, revised, updated and translated version of “Huis-tuinen-keukenmoraal? Jan van Leeuwen en de Tien Geboden”, *Spiegel der Letteren* 52 (2010) 1–29.

1 The (imperfect) standard work on Jan van Leeuwen remains Axters S., *Jan van Leeuwen. Een bloemlezing uit zijn werken* (Antwerp: 1943), not least because it contains numerous excerpts from Van Leeuwen's writings. More recent material can be found in general works such as Ruh K., *Geschichte der abendländischen Mystik. Vierter Band. Die niederländische Mystik des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: 1996) 100–117; Warnar G., *Ruusbroec. Literature and Mysticism in the Fourteenth Century*, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 150 (Leiden – Boston: 2007) 211–219; McGinn B., *The Varieties of Vernacular Mysticism 1350–1550*, The Presence of God. A History of Western Christian Mysticism V (New York: 2012) 71–76; and Van Oostrom F., *Wereld in woorden. Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse literatuur 1300–1400* (Amsterdam: 2013) 254–261.

writings that he was completely illiterate when he joined John of Ruusbroec and his companions, more than twenty treatises by the 'good cook' (*bonus cocus*), as he was familiarly known in Groenendaal, have survived. Of those, two are devoted to the Ten Commandments.

In the scholarly literature,² the existence of those two texts has been linked to that of the two volumes that make up Jan van Leeuwen's *opera omnia*. On at least two occasions, Jan van Leeuwen's writings were collected within the priory; the first time, they were clearly collected and intended for distribution, since this is precisely what happened to five of Jan van Leeuwen's treatises, which were distributed outside the priory around 1355. The first volume of the *opera omnia*, which most probably came into being after the death of Jan van Leeuwen (and of Ruusbroec) at the end of the fourteenth century, comprises those five treatises, together with another four. One of the latter is entitled *Dboec vanden x gheboden gods* (*The Book on God's Ten Commandments*), and was written in 1358. Three copies of this first volume have survived: one prepared around 1400 (of which only six folios remain; [Fig. 7.1]), another dating to around 1460, and the last copy was prepared in 1540. It seems that this first volume was also intended for distribution. Of the second volume, only one copy is extant: it was composed in 1543, in the same priory of regular canons (Herent) in which the third copy of the first volume (1540) was made. The second volume of Jan van Leeuwen's *opera omnia* holds the second treatise on the Decalogue, entitled *Dboec vanden x gheboden* (*Book on the Ten Commandments*). This was composed by the good cook in 1355, prior to the writing of his other text on the Old Testament Law.

According to the authors of what is considered a seminal article,³ the second volume of Jan van Leeuwen's *opera omnia* was made up of treatises which the good cook never completed, texts that were viewed as somewhat 'dangerous', such as Van Leeuwen's infamous treatise on the teachings of Meister Eckhart (*Van meester eckaerts leere daer hi in doelde*), and redundant texts, such as the first treatise on the Ten Commandments. Indeed, Geirnaert and Reynaert considered Jan van Leeuwen's second text on the Decalogue to be an update of his earlier insights on the Commandments of the Old Law. However, in the present article, it will be argued that differences in their content, together with the fact that one Decalogue treatise was placed within the first volume and

2 Geirnaert D. – Reynaert J., "Geestelijke spijs met zalige vermaning. Verspreiding, overlevering en receptie van Jan van Leeuwen", in Mertens Th. et al. (eds.), *Boeken voor de eeuwigheid. Middelnederlands geestelijk proza*, Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur in de middeleeuwen 8 (Amsterdam: 1993) 190–209, 426–434, here 192–193.

3 Geirnaert – Reynaert, "Geestelijke spijs" 192.

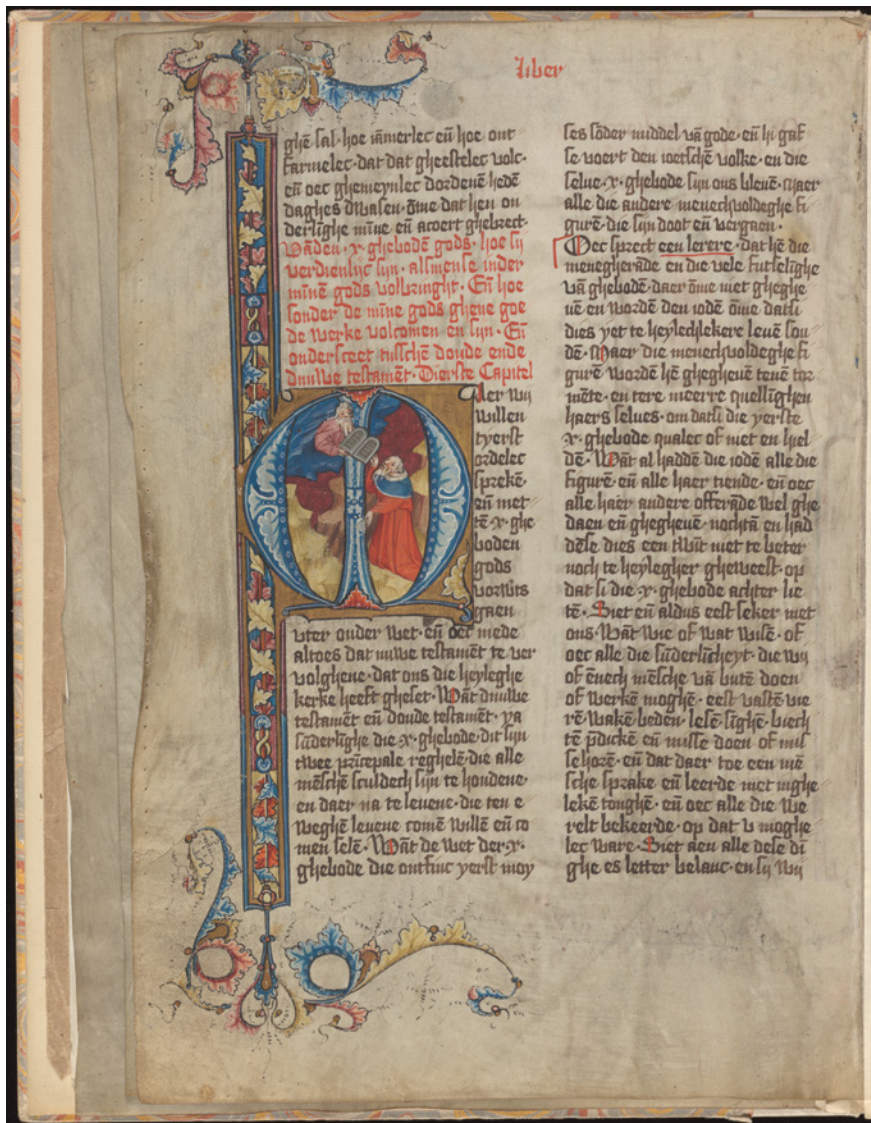


FIGURE 7.1 Opening of the main text of Jan van Leeuwen's youngest treatise on the Ten Commandments (1358). Decorated initial 'M'; showing Moses receiving the two stone tablets. MS Brussels, Royal Library, II 138 (c. 1400; Groenendaal), fol. 3v. REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION.

the other in the second, are related to the readership and/or audience of the respective Decalogue commentaries.

Jan van Leeuwen's *opera omnia*

As remarkable as it seems, all of the texts the good cook wrote are available to us. In total, twenty-two treatises were gathered in two volumes (cf. *supra*), most probably at the end of the fourteenth century. As stated above, whilst the writings in the first volume were intended for distribution, those in the second volume were, at least in the fifteenth century, most probably only read in the priory itself. Although the collecting of the works of a contemporary author is usually thought to be a phenomenon that arose alongside the (early) modern concept of authorship,⁴ the works of four Middle Dutch authors had already been subject to collection in the Middle Ages.⁵ Three of these are known as Brabant mystical writers—Hadewijch (c. 1240), John of Ruusbroec († 1381), and Jan van Leeuwen († 1378)—and the fourth was Willem van Hildegarsberch († c. 1408), an elocutionist who was mainly active in Holland. It appears that the community to which Ruusbroec and Van Leeuwen belonged was responsible for collecting their works, but this does not explain why only these two writers' works were selected, as fourteenth-century Groenendaal housed a number of other excellent authors.⁶ Ruusbroec was obviously the spiritual leader during the first few decades of the community's existence, and there is therefore nothing surprising about his writings' having been preserved and distributed by his confrères. But why the good cook, a lay brother who was fully illiterate when he first came to Groenendaal, and who wrote—according to the views of a number of nineteenth-century scholars—nonsense, was granted the same honour is less self-explanatory. Moreover, in the earliest of the preserved *opera omnia*-manuscripts, Van Leeuwen's writings are accompanied by two full-page author portraits—another rare phenomenon in Middle Dutch literature—that show him cooking, praying, and writing.⁷ Thirdly, around 1420,

4 Nash A., *The Culture of Collected Editions* (Houndmills: 2003) 2.

5 Willaert F., "Les Opera omnia d'une mystique brabançonne. Réflexions sur la mise en recueil et la tradition manuscrite des œuvres de Hadewijch (d'Anvers?)," in Van Hemelryck T. – Marzano S. (eds.), *Le recueil au Moyen Âge. La fin du Moyen Âge*, Texte, codex & contexte 9 (Turnhout: 2010) 333–345.

6 The works of Jan van Schoonhoven († 1432) were also collected, but he wrote only in Latin (Ampe A. et al. (eds.), *Jan van Ruusbroec 1293–1381. Tentoonstellingscatalogus* (Brussels: 1981) 284–287).

7 *Vlaamse miniaturen voor Van Eyck (ca. 1380–ca. 1420). Catalogus*, Corpus van Verluchte Handschriften 6 (Leuven: 1993) 205.

Pomerius, a canon of Groenendaal, wrote a Latin chronicle of his community, which was accompanied by a *vita* of John of Ruusbroec and one of Jan van Leeuwen.⁸ Once again, therefore, the good cook was privileged, and one might ask why this was the case. However, it is not one of the goals of the present contribution to answer that particular question.⁹ Recent and ongoing research shows that Groenendaal not only collected, but also edited the cook's writings, and that his *opera omnia* was one of the means by which the community tried to create a distinct profile for itself.¹⁰ Nevertheless, although in the twentieth century Jan van Leeuwen was mainly considered a disciple of the great Ruusbroec, who added nothing new to the teachings of his prior, the inhabitants of Groenendaal (and of other religious communities) must have had a reason to value the cook's writings; otherwise, they would not have preserved them. The self-promotion of the community might have been one of their concerns in collecting the cook's works, but it seems unlikely that Groenendaal would have chosen to use writings that made no sense (as nineteenth-century scholars describe the cook's texts) to achieve this goal. Close examination of his two treatises on the Ten Commandments make it abundantly clear that the cook did add value in terms of content to the writings of his prior, John of Ruusbroec.

The Ten Commandments in Middle Dutch Literature before Jan van Leeuwen

Middle Dutch literature composed before the middle of the fourteenth century illustrates what scholars such as Bast have previously argued, which is that moral instruction seems to have generally taken place in accordance with the normative system of the Seven Deadly Sins, as introduced by pope Gregory the Great († 604).¹¹ It was not until the twelfth century, when biblical

8 Edited in De Leu, J.B., "De origine monasterii Viridisvallis una cum vitis B. Joannis Rusbrochii primi prioris hujus monasterii et aliquot coetaneorum ejus", *Analecta bolandiana* 4 (1885) 257–334.

9 See: Vandemeulebroucke E., "De autoriteit van een kok. Hoe van Jan van Leeuwen († 1378) een *auctor* werd gemaakt", *Spiegel der Letteren* 57 (2015) 375–406.

10 See: Vandemeulebroucke E. – Desplenter Y., "How Jan van Leeuwen († 1378) was made an Author. Opera Omnia and Authority", in Boodts S. – Leemans J. – Meijns B. (eds.), *Shaping Authority. How Did a Person Become an Authority in Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance?* Lectio. Studies in the Transmission of Texts & Ideas 4 (Turnhout: 2016) 363–387.

11 Bast R.J., *Honor your Fathers. Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, c. 1400–1600*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought 63 (Leiden: 1997)

exegetes in Paris and Chartres assumed a more positive attitude towards the Old Law—which was first and foremost intended for the Jewish people—that the Ten Commandments were deemed suitable for the instruction of Christian morals. From the fourteenth century onwards, in Western Europe, there was an increase in vernacular texts that featured the Decalogue, in place of the Seven Deadly Sins, as the normative system of Christian moral instruction. At the same time, the guidelines for confession stipulated at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) were being disseminated.¹²

As already stated, the Middle Dutch tradition is no exception to this development. In his *Scolastica* (1271), a Middle Dutch adaptation of Petrus Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*, Jacob van Maerlant mentions the Ten Commandments in a brief and terse way, more as part of his biblical history, and less as an attempt to instruct his public on the moral value of the Decalogue. Nevertheless, at the end of his account, he states: 'Hier ghaen uut die X ghebode / Die ons gheset sijn van gode' ('Here end the Ten Commandments / Which were imposed on us by God'),¹³ so as to assure his readers that the Old Law was not only valid for Jews. One of Maerlant's greatest admirers, Jan van Boendale († c. 1351), went a few steps further, not only by stressing the current significance of the Ten Commandments for fourteenth-century Christians, but also by hammering away at their value for moral behaviour. In *Jans Teesteye* (*Jan's Conviction*, before 1333), a dialogue between two friends, Jan and Wouter, the first loses his temper because the second does not know the Ten Commandments.¹⁴ Jan had just answered Wouter's first question—what must one do to reach the kingdom of heaven—with the statement 'by keeping the Ten Commandments'. Jan is a good teacher to his friend, and lists the Commandments, but not before introducing them as follows: 'Also men vint / In dEwangelie / soe sijn

esp. 1–52; and idem, "From Two Kingdoms to Two Tables. The Ten Commandments and the Christian Magistrate", *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 89 (1998) 79–95, esp. 81–85.

12 See: Weert Jan de, *Nieuwe Doctrinael of Spieghel van Sonden*, ed. J. Jacobs (The Hague: 1915) 102ff.; Spaapen B., "Nieuwe Stoffen voor de Studie van het Middelnederlandsch Gebodenonderricht", *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 14 (1940) 89–108, 135–172; and Suntrup R. – Wachinger B. – Zotz N., "«Zehn Gebote» (Deutsche Erklärungen)", in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, vol. 10 (Berlin et al.: 1999) cols. 1484–1503.

13 As cited in Gysseling M. (ed.), *Corpus van Middelnederlandse teksten (tot en met het jaar 1300). Reeks 11: Literaire handschriften. Deel 3, Rijmbijbel/tekst* (Leiden: 1983), v. 4627–4628 (italics mine). In all Middle Dutch quotations, spelling (especially u/v/w and i/j) and interpunction have been adapted to modern standards.

14 Chapter 29, v. 2544–2565; cf. Snellaert F.-A. (ed.), *Nederlandsche gedichten uit de veertiende eeuw van Jan van Boendale, Hein van Aken en anderen, naar het Oxfordsch handschrift* (Brussels: 1869) 223.

dese / Tiene ghebode die ic u lese' ('As one finds / In the Gospel / are the / Ten Commandments I read to you').¹⁵ However, the Seven Deadly Sins still seem to be of greater significance for the two friends. The brief listing of the Ten Commandments is followed by an elaboration of the Seven Sins, especially on the third most important one, after *hoverde* ('pride') and *ghierecheyt* ('greed'), known as *nidecheyt* ('envy'). Similarly, greater interest in the Seven Sins can also be seen in the *Nieuwe doctrinael of spieghel van sonden* by Jan de Weert (1300–1350).¹⁶ This surgeon and author of moral-didactic writings not only opened this treatise with a discussion on the Seven Sins, but also wrote considerably less on the Decalogue (by a factor of three)—and only after his fuller treatment of the Sins.¹⁷ Conversely, Jan de Weert simultaneously took his discussion of the Ten Commandments a step further, as he did not limit himself to a rhymed list of the Ten Commandments, but also expounded on those individuals who sin against them. The same treatment of the Decalogue, as connected with moral instruction and social criticism, is to be found in Jan van Leeuwen's treatises. However, the lay brother from Groenendaal clearly made a choice to give the Ten Commandments pride of place over the Seven Deadly Sins, which are no longer (explicitly) discussed. In doing so, he followed the discourse of the Latin textual tradition, in which the Seven Sins had never been central for the moral instruction of their public.¹⁸

Two Treatises on the Ten Commandments by Jan van Leeuwen

In the context of the (nearly non-existent) tradition of thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Middle Dutch commentaries on the Decalogue, the two treatises composed by Jan van Leeuwen in the 1350s appear quite remarkable. In terms of content, the two texts are much richer than the writings discussed

15 Chapter 29, v. 2581–2583; cf. Snellaert, *Nederlandsche gedichten* 224. See: *Mt.* 19:17–19; *Mk.* 10:19; *Lk.* 18:20.

16 On this author, see: Brinkman H., "De stedelijke context van het werk van Jan de Weert (veertiende eeuw)", in Pleij H. et al. (eds.), *Op belofte van profijt. Stadsliteratuur en burgermoraal in de Nederlandse letterkunde van de middeleeuwen*, Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur in de middeleeuwen 4 (Amsterdam: 1991) 101–120, 362–368. On the treatise, see: Bange P., *Moraliteyt saelt wesen. Het laat-middeleeuwse moralistische discours in de Nederlanden*, Middeleeuwse Studies en Bronnen 10 (Hilversum: 2007) 81–101 (Seven Sins) and 112–115 (Ten Commandments).

17 Jan de Weert, *Nieuwe Doctrinael* 106–107.

18 Bloomfield M.W., *The Seven Deadly Sins. An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (Michigan: 1952) 99.

in the previous paragraph. The oldest treatise (dating to 1355) runs to about 20,000 words, the latest (1358) to 40,000. Within them, the good cook hardly repeats himself: most of the content in the later treatise was not present in the older one. This makes the hypothesis formulated by Geirnaert and Reynaert (cf. *supra*) less plausible. They suggest that the older treatise was copied in the second volume of Jan van Leeuwen's *opera omnia* because it had become redundant when the second treatise was written. However, the fact that there is hardly any overlap in terms of the material points to other possible motivations for the Groenendaal canons to include it in the second volume. As already stated, the treatises in the second volume were not distributed to the same extent as those in the first, but sometimes it is not evident why certain texts were thought of as less suitable for dissemination than others. For instance, Geirnaert and Reynaert considered the presence of Jan van Leeuwen's most internationally notorious treatise, on the teachings of Meister Eckhart (*Van meester eckaerts leere daer hi in doelde*; cf. *supra*), in the second volume to require little explanation, since it was understood as 'dangerous' on a doctrinal level.¹⁹ However, in the first treatise on the Ten Commandments, the one found in the first volume of the *opera omnia*, we also encounter a passage in which Jan van Leeuwen attacks Meister Eckhart. Indeed, it was the good cook's habit to repeat his central points of view in every treatise, and it seems that we still do not have enough insight into the composition of his *opera omnia* to be able to decide why one treatise was included in the first volume, and another in the second. Close analysis of the two treatises on the Decalogue might bring us a step further with regard to this matter. In any case, the Ten Commandments seem to have functioned once more as a vehicle for Jan van Leeuwen's general ideas, but this was a new vehicle within the vernacular tradition, and one that, remarkably, he made use of on two occasions. Moreover, John of Ruusbroec never wrote a commentary on the Decalogue, and the fact that Jan van Leeuwen did might serve to distinguish him from Ruusbroec as an author who did not simply repeat what his master said, but who had views of his own.

An associative style of writing is considered typical of Jan van Leeuwen; this style repeatedly results in a series of elaborations. Remarkably enough, the author seems to have been conscious of this phenomenon, as becomes clear from his commentary on the Sixth Commandment ("Thou shalt not steal") in his oldest treatise. Within that commentary, we find a discussion on 'dondersceet vander minnen waer datse natuerlijk es ende waerse overnatuerlijk es uut gode gheboren' ['on the difference of natural Love and supernatural Love, born from

19 Geirnaert – Reynaert, "Geestelijke spijs" 192.

God'] (MS Brussels, RL, 888–90, fol. 22va). The author realises that he has strayed off-topic, and then corrects himself: 'Ende daer omme en willic op dese materie niet meer bliven, maer ic soude ons noch gherne elettelken vanden sesten ghebode der dieften bescriven' ['And that is why I do not want to continue with this subject, but I would like to write some more on the Sixth Commandment, on theft'] (MS Brussels, RL, 888–90, fols. 22vb–23ra).²⁰ However, a few lines later, Jan van Leeuwen again digresses from the topic at hand.

The format of the two treatises is more or less the same, but the content, as already stated, is not. Both texts open with a rhymed version of the Ten Commandments, and after each one, those already discussed are repeated, again in rhyme. For instance, after the Third Commandment in the oldest treatise, we read 'Nu mint dan ende oeffent enen god ende en swert oec bi hem niet ydelijc in u spot ende viert die heileghe daghe alle gader' ['Love and honour one God, do not swear in his Name in your mocking, and celebrate all the holy days'] (MS Brussels, RL, 888–90, fol. 16ra). A similar way of closing the commentary on the same Commandment is found in the later treatise. Nevertheless, in terms of content the comments on the Ten Commandments in the two treatises are decidedly distinct. In the oldest treatise for instance, in the discussion of the Seventh Commandment ('Thou shalt not commit adultery'), Jan van Leeuwen not only considers adultery and physical impurity, but also mental impurity, which he equates with the Deadly Sin of *hoerdelicheit* ('pride'). The consideration ends with the recommendation of the cook's favourite virtue, *oetmoedicheit* ('modesty'). However, in the later treatise, Jan van Leeuwen seems to develop a completely different opinion on adultery. Here, it is defined as looking for satisfaction or comfort in everything that is not God. It becomes clear that the Seven Deadly Sins have not disappeared from the lay brother's mind, but diverging from earlier Middle Dutch treatises on morality, he situated them here within the framework of the Ten Commandments.

Jan van Leeuwen's First Treatise on the Ten Commandments (1355)

Upon reading the two treatises, the oldest seems to be more consistent than the second, although consistency is a term difficult to apply to Jan van Leeuwen's writings (cf. supra). Both treatises are indeed characterized by an

20 We should keep in mind that these remarks could have been added at a later stage, as we know the texts were certainly edited before they were copied into the extant *opera omnia*-manuscripts.

associative style, and by a lot of elaborations, but unlike the later treatise, the older one demonstrates a constant style and tone, with no apparent breaks or shifts. We could therefore assume that the older text was written in a single campaign, and is not the result of the stringing together of a variety of shorter texts. Logically, the older treatise must have been intended for a single, particular target group. Geirnaert and Reynaert considered this to be an audience of lay people, but certain indications suggest that this is not necessarily the case. In the discussion of the Seventh Commandment ('Thou shalt not commit adultery'), for instance, in one of the chapter titles—which were added by the editors of the *opera omnia*, not by Jan van Leeuwen himself—we read: 'Van sevenderhande manieren van overspele ende oncuuschen levene [...] xxiiij Capittle *dese 1J capittle machmen overslaen*' ('On seven ways of adultery and impure life [...] twenty-fourth chapter *These two chapters can be skipped*') (MS Brussels, RL, 888–90, fol. 17vb, emphasis added). The twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters not only discuss adultery and impurity within marriage, but extend to other types of impure behaviour in religious people. These are the passages in which Jan van Leeuwen excels, as he fulminates against the state of the world, in a forthright manner. What he perceives to be sexually deviant tendencies, such as homosexuality, he says, must be severely categorized as mortal sins, and are described as being more dissolute than a monk or bishop having intercourse with a nun. He adds: '[...] dese onnatuerliker verderffnisse gheschiet nu soe vele in eertrike, ya ende sonderlinghen onder gheestelijc volc van habite [...]' ['this unnatural perversion now occurs so much on earth, especially amongst the clergy'] (MS Brussels, RL, 888–90, fol. 27ra–b). One might ask whether the good cook, who lived in a priory of canons and priests, would attack the clergy in a treatise intended for lay people? Would it not be more in character for him directly to attack the representatives of the Church in a text intended for them? If that were the case, one would then need to ask why passages on marriage are included in the treatise.

Recent research shows that Jan van Leeuwen was portrayed by his community Groenendaal to the outer world as an illiterate who had learned to read and write with help from the Holy Ghost, the true source of all his knowledge. Because he was considered a prophet and an authority on all things religious and moral, he could legitimately address the clergy.²¹ In other words, he might have intended to teach clerics how the laity should behave, so that they in turn could instruct their parish in matters such as marriage. The assumption that this treatise was in any case intended for a readership that had some theological

21 Vandemeulebroucke, "De autoriteit van een kok"; and Vandemeulebroucke – Desplenter, "How Jan van Leeuwen († 1378) was made an Author".

background is confirmed by the fact that Jan van Leeuwen repeatedly stresses that the Decalogue, though initially intended for the Jewish people, applies to Christians as well. However, although he clarifies that the text applies to Jews and to Christians, he also states that members of the latter group should interpret some of the Commandments differently. For instance, on the Seventh Commandment (adultery/impurity), we read the following:

Want in doude wet soe plach men dwijf ten yersten male te duedene aenden lichame die vleeschelike overspeel dede. Ende ic segghe, seker men mochse nu vele bat dueden na kersteliker wet alsmen grootheid der sonden alleen aensaghe, ya overmits dat ons gheset ende gheraden es heilichlikere te levene dant den yoden was [Because in the Old Law, a wife who committed adultery in the flesh, was killed. And I tell you, nowadays, after the Christian Law, if she committed that kind of sin, she should be killed with even more reason, as we are ordered and advised to live an even holier life than the Jews were].

MS BRUSSELS, RL, 888–90, FOL. 26VA

This differs significantly from the discourse found in Jan van Boendale's *Jans Teesteye* (cf. *supra*), a text explicitly intended for lay readers. In his treatise, Boendale even tries to obscure the fact that the Ten Commandments were initially intended for Jews. In any case, this fact does not appear to have been of any importance to him or to his readership.

A final clue to help identify the nature of the readers of the first treatise, are passages in which Jan van Leeuwen uses more explicit language. Presumably, a learned audience would not have been offended by phrasing of this kind. For instance, when discussing the Second Commandment ('Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain'), he not only condemns those who use the name of the Lord in vain, but also those who curse:

Ende dit sijn duvelike menschen, die daer sweeren bider doot ende biden wonden of biden sweete ende biden stroute [sic] ende biden eerschate of biden naghelen des heeren [And these are devilish people, who swear by the death, the wounds or the sweat, or the shit, or the anus or the nails of the Lord].

MS BRUSSELS, RL, 888–90, FOL. 11RA-B

That may have been the reason why this treatise was copied in the second volume of the *opera omnia*, a volume most likely intended solely for the inhabitants of Groenendaal, and not for distribution outside the community.

Jan van Leeuwen's Second Treatise on the Ten Commandments (1358)

The later of the two treatises appears far less consistent than the older one, and the text is also more fragmentary in nature. Moreover, the audience is invoked much more often. In other words, the oldest text looks more like an essay, addressed to a general audience ('wi' [we] and 'ons' [us] are the most commonly-used pronouns), whereas the latter displays the characteristics of a sermon ('ghi' and 'u' [you] are the most frequent personal pronouns). The following is a typical example of the type of phrasing used in the latter:

Besiet u selven, ende neemt uwes selves concientie wel goede ware van binnen, dat ghi selve al willens ende wetens ter hellen niet en vaert of en sijt ghevaren met eenegher dooetsonden die ghy an u hebt of weet [Look at yourself, and take good care of your conscience, so that you do not go to hell knowingly, or have already gone, with deadly sins that you have committed].

MS BRUSSELS, RL, IV 401, FOL. 3RB-VA

However, this treatise should not be designated a 'sermon' for two reasons. First of all, the text is much too long (c. 40,000 words) to be a sermon proper. Secondly, Jan van Leeuwen was a lay brother, and was therefore not permitted to preach.

In terms of the first problem, we have already ascertained that the text is relatively incoherent and shows several breaks. The treatise can therefore be thought of as a compilation of texts (cf. *infra*). Furthermore, it should be noted that certain parts of the treatise demonstrate oral characteristics: Jan van Leeuwen repeats himself on more than one occasion—more so than in his other texts—and longer sections consist of rhymed prose: for instance, his comments on the Third Commandment ('Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy'). We could therefore think of his second treatise on the Decalogue as, at least in part, the written result of (or preparation for) lectures or addresses given by the good cook.

A close reading of the text reveals the public for whom it was partly written. In particular, from his discussion of those who fail to observe the Sabbath, we can deduce that this portion of his treatise was addressed to a specific group of people. Jan van Leeuwen here criticizes twenty-three groups overall, because they break the Third Commandment. Of these groups, the good cook only addresses one with 'ghy' ('you'), whereas all the others are addressed in the third person ('they'):

Up sondaghe ende up heyleghe daghe en soudemen anders gheen comescap driven dan van lijfliker noetdorft. Ende wat ghy coept of vercoept, dat doet metten alre minsten te vulcommene, behoudelike dien dat ghy om ne gheen dijnc u ghebode noch u messe noch uwen keercganc niet en verlet; daer u dat ontblivet, dat laet u rauwen ende sprekes u biechte [On Sundays and Holy Days, one should not be dealing goods, except when vitally necessary. And if you do buy or sell, do so only as much as is required to meet your needs, and on condition that you are in no way neglectful of the Commandments, or of your mass or church attendance; if you were to fail, you should show remorse and go to confession].

MS BRUSSELS, RL, IV 401, FOL. 19VA

In this part of the treatise, the addressees appear to be merchants. This hypothesis is strengthened by the observation that they are counselled much more gently than the other twenty-two groups. Merchants should try not to neglect this Commandment, but if they do, they should be remorseful and go and confess their transgressions against the Divine Law. By contrast, where he deals with the matter of tramps and beggars not observing the Sabbath, Jan van Leeuwen entreats the Holy Roman Emperor to have them beheaded.²² Furthermore, the good cook gives a detailed account of the merchants and their trade, but refrains from discussing any other group at length. Other passages on the Third Commandment show that his addressees were not without means, as Jan van Leeuwen asks them not to give anything to street musicians, but instead to save their alms for the poor. Although the author states at the beginning of his discussion of the twenty-three groups of people who break the Third Commandment, that what he is about to say concerns all of them, it seems quite obvious that those he is really addressing are first and foremost merchants.

The last of the twenty-three groups that Jan van Leeuwen discusses consists of peasant men, village wives, and 'oude quenen' ('old bags') who go to village churches on Sundays. The men are accused of hastily leaving church before the service ends, and the others are chastised for their constant chattering. The way the Sunday mass is celebrated in village churches is thus heavily criticized by Jan van Leeuwen. His addressees, the merchants, were in all

²² This request resembles the one to be found in the sermons on the Decalogue by Jan Hus († 1415; cf. Bast, "From Two Kingdoms to Two Tables" 82–83), in which he requested the Bohemian prince to execute anyone who breaks the Ten Commandments. Bast considered such requests as heralds of the protestant view on worldly authorities, who were responsible for enforcing the Ten Commandments as the moral foundation of society.

likelihood mainly city folk, perhaps residents of Brussels (some ten kilometres from Groenendaal). As the discussion of the Third Commandment displays several indications of speech, we might rightly deduce that this part of the treatise came into being as the written result of (or preparation for) something Jan van Leeuwen said or was preparing to say. In what context this may have happened cannot be conjectured. However, there seem to be two possibilities. First of all, it is known that Jan van Leeuwen was responsible for receiving and taking care of the guests who visited the community of Groenendaal. Perhaps giving lectures for their salvation was part of his job. Secondly, although leaving the community was perhaps difficult (if not forbidden) for a cook, travel would have been possible for him in his role as a lecturer: he could have gone to Brussels to give lectures—perhaps in merchant's homes. Vernacular sermons or lectures on the topic of the Ten Commandments seem to have been particularly popular during the Lenten period in the fifteenth century, as exemplified by a manuscript written in Ghent, containing Middle Dutch sermons on the Ten Commandments.²³

The hypothesis that Jan van Leeuwen's treatise could be a compilation of texts, as stated above, can be additionally deduced from the further content of the comments on the Third Commandment. The rhymed prose disappears, and the text discusses a plethora of subjects, such as the nature of the Holy Trinity, offers a (new) critique of the doctrine and the disciples of Meister Eckhart, and calls for commemoration of the Passion of Christ. Amongst these various topics, we find advice on how correctly to observe the Sabbath. Furthermore, Jan van Leeuwen, or perhaps the editors of his writings, once again refer(s) to the people who break this Commandment, but in a peculiar way:

Want ghelikerwijs dat ic dicwile ghesproken hebbe, so seggic noch dat sy alle haer vierte breken die ghene die des sondaechs of op heyleghe daghe loepen, danschen, reyen, caetsen, clossen, cloten, dobbelen of wat spele dat sy spelen daer sy haer messe of den dienst gods by beletten [...]: dese gaen alle ten helschen putte waert [As I have often said, I say again, that they do not observe the Sabbath, those who on Sunday or Holy Days are playing games which keep them from attending Mass or a service: they will all go to hell].

MS BRUSSELS, RL, IV 401, FOL. 29RA

23 Cf. Blokker L., "Dit navolghende sijn sermoenen ende es wat verclaers vanden gheboden gods. Vijftiende-eeuwse Gentse decaloogsermoenen in hun context", *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Zuid-Nederlandse Maatschappij voor Taal- en Letterkunde en Geschiedenis* (in press).

'As I have often said' does not seem to refer to anything that has been discussed in the preceding pages, and therefore, the comment on the groups seems to refer to another text. Such stylistic breaks and textual ruptures can be seen in Jan van Leeuwen's other treatises, and the traditional explanation for this strange phenomenon is that the Cook had to write in between other activities, such as cooking. However, it makes more sense to assume that these characteristics resulted first and foremost from the fact that (some of) his treatises were in fact compilations of shorter texts and/or lectures, which initially functioned in different ways, and were perhaps also intended for different kinds of public.

Jan van Leeuwen and the Ten Commandments

The good cook of Groenendaal has left us two treatises on the Ten Commandments, more extensive than anything written on that theme in Middle Dutch before him. A final question that needs to be asked is what inspired Jan van Leeuwen to write (and perhaps also speak) on the Decalogue in the vernacular? As stated, medieval vernacular texts on morals and morality tended to be structured according to the Seven Deadly Sins. Theologians, on the other hand, favoured the Decalogue when writing on (Christian) ethics, as early as the twelfth century. In literature composed for lay people—who were not adept in Latin—the Ten Commandments only started to feature from the second half of the fourteenth century, and increasingly so from 1500 onwards, as is apparent from the overview given above. In other words, Jan van Leeuwen's treatises are examples of 'vernacular theology', as defined by Nicholas Watson, that took root from the fourteenth century onwards.²⁴ Certainly Van Leeuwen's first treatise on the Ten Commandments was written by someone who was interested in theology and mysticism, and it was intended for a public with a sound theological grounding. This becomes obvious from comparisons with older texts in which the Ten Commandments appear, for instance those of Boendale or De Weert. The nature and the intended public of those texts appear to be of an entirely different kind. Moreover, it is Jan van Leeuwen who was the first in the Middle Dutch tradition to stress that all that mattered was the Decalogue, the Divine Law. This is to say that the good cook of Groenendaal was the first Middle Dutch author to value the Ten Commandments in the same way

24 See: Watson N., "Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409", *Speculum* 70 (1995) 822–864, on the introduction of the term, which he applied to any vernacular writing '[...] that communicates theological information to an audience' (823–824).

as the Latin tradition. That point of view was then shared with the public that such authors as Jan van Boendale had in mind, namely, the city merchants and patricians.

By whom or for what reason the good cook was prompted so extensively to discuss the Decalogue in his vernacular treatises can almost certainly not be known. For nineteenth- and twentieth-century researchers, the answer was straightforward: Jan van Leeuwen was considered as a pupil of the great Ruusbroec, less sophisticated than his master. However, in his longer writings, the first prior of Groenendaal never considers the Ten Commandments in depth. In his letters, on the other hand, he clearly indicates in several places that his intended readers, especially lay people, should live according to the Decalogue.²⁵ Since he does not discuss them in any detail, we can assume that his readers were fully initiated into the content of the Ten Commandments. Previous scholarship on Jan van Leeuwen and the Middle Dutch tradition, has characterized his treatises on the Decalogue as unique. As we have seen, there were indeed no predecessors. However, considered from a wider perspective, extensive vernacular writings on the Decalogue that broach a wide variety of topics did already exist, even to the extent of forming some kind of tradition. In Störmer-Caysa's rudimentary classification of medieval German writings on the Ten Commandments, Jan van Leeuwen would fit perfectly into the third and final category, that of 'Großdarstellungen' ('large representations').²⁶ In those treatises, the Decalogue is considered as a scheme, in which the authors try to incorporate as much normative content as possible, not only that codified in catechesis and religious instruction. According to Störmer-Caysa, the vernacular treatise on the Ten Commandments written by the Franciscan Marquard von Lindau († 1392) also forms part of this category, as does the Latin treatise by the Hermit of Saint Augustine Heinrich von Friemar († 1340), from which a German translation survives in fifteenth-century manuscripts. Heinrich von Friemar's text was one of the main sources for Marquard von Lindau's own treatise.²⁷ Heinrich von Friemar and Marquard von Lindau were in turn inspired and influenced by the Dominican mystics from the Rhineland;

25 See: De Baere G. – Mertens Th. – Noë H. (eds.), *Jan van Ruusbroec. Opera omnia, vol. 10*, Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis CX (Tielt et al.: 1991) 539 (to a nun of the Order of Saint Clare, Margareta van Meerbeke), 543–544 (to Lady Mechtild, widow of the knight Jan van Culemborg), 596–597 (to a woman, presumably a lay person), and 607 (idem).

26 Störmer-Caysa U., *Gewissen und Buch. Über den Weg eines Begriffes in die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte 14 (Berlin et al.: 1998) 200–211.

27 Palmer N.F., "Marquard von Lindau OFM", in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon, vol. 6* (Berlin et al.: 1987), cols. 81–126, here 82.

by Meister Eckhart in the case of the former, and by John Tauler for the latter. Groenendaal, Jan van Leeuwen's community, was in any case highly acquainted with these two Dominicans, but their impact on the good cook has been studied insufficiently up to now.²⁸ Although the inhabitants of Groenendaal had contacts with prominent religious figures from the Rhine region, and were well-informed on spiritual matters (see the criticism on Meister Eckhart in the writings of Jan van Leeuwen), none of the aforementioned Decalogue commentaries written in the German region was a direct source for the good cook. On the contrary, the treatise by Marquard von Lindau was influenced by the spirituality of Groenendaal, as the author quotes from (the Alemannic translation of) Ruusbroec's *Gheestelike Brulocht* (*The Spiritual Espousals*).²⁹ Given that there seems to be no connection between Marquard's treatise and the commentaries by Jan van Leeuwen, we can exclude the latter as a source for the former. Nevertheless, Marquard's text was translated into Middle Dutch, and distributed widely.

Conclusion

Prior research on Jan van Leeuwen has tended to analyse him in order to gain further insight into the writings of his prior, the arguably better-known mystic John of Ruusbroec. Strictly speaking, that approach is not entirely wrong. The brothers of Groenendaal indeed edited the good cook's texts, and one may assume that they were not circulated before Ruusbroec had authorised them. However, Jan van Leeuwen does appear to have been more original in his writings than has generally been assumed, as becomes clear from his two treatises on the Decalogue. Moral content that was undoubtedly already known to those members of the Christian community who had not mastered Latin, was folded into a kind of commentary with which they probably were not familiar. Up to the fourteenth century, commentaries on the Decalogue were reserved for theologians; lay people were informed on what they could and could not do through the medium of the Seven Deadly Sins. Remarkably enough, the texts that most closely resemble those two composed by the good cook, were written by clerics (Heinrich von Friemar and Marquard von Lindau) who expressed themselves in Latin, or in Latin and the vernacular. Unlike Jan van Boendale and Jan de Weert, the good cook not only addressed lay people, but he also

28 Recently published is Kikuchi S., "Jan van Leeuwen's Criticism of Meister Eckhart: An Aspect of the Impact from the Papal Bull *In Agro Dominico* in Fourteenth-century Brabant", *Medieval Mystical Theology* 21 (2012) 170–192.

29 Palmer, "Marquard von Lindau OFM", col. 90.

confronted readers who had no access to Latinate culture, with a discourse on the Ten Commandments, which hitherto was limited to theologians. In Dutch-speaking regions, he seems to have been the first to use this discourse in vernacular writings, but if observed from a broader perspective, initiatives similar to his can be found in Germanic areas. Although there are no immediate connections to the Decalogue treatises by Heinrich von Friemar or Marquard von Lindau, Jan van Leeuwen's writings on the Ten Commandments clearly belong to the same genre.

Jan van Leeuwen was also capable of writing texts that were not inspired by Ruusbroec's, and probably based on models taken from the Rhineland. This of course does not imply that Ruusbroec could not have guided him in person. Nevertheless, unlike his prior, Jan van Leeuwen was a lay brother, who also wrote in the vernacular, and most probably tried to reach the same type of mixed audience for whom Ruusbroec wrote. He approached lay and religious people with a message whose moral and theological aspirations were not inferior to Ruusbroec's, although the message of the latter was of course packaged in a more high-spirited tone.

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Latin Mnemonic Verses Combining the Ten Commandments with the Ten Plagues of Egypt Transmitted in Late Medieval Bohemia

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1 Late Medieval Decalogue

In Bohemia a proliferation of texts on the Decalogue developed in the late fourteenth century and covered the whole of the fifteenth century—the time of the Hussite reformation. The texts are of various types—theological treatises, paraphrases, catechetic notes and mnemonic aids—and appear in all three languages spoken in the area at the time: Latin, Czech and German. Much of the manuscript material remains unedited and unstudied, which is partly due to the fact that these texts do not directly relate to the religious controversy which defined the period, partly because the material is too vast and tends to be rather unoriginal. The boom is certainly at least partly due to John Wyclif's treatise *De mandatis divinis* (*On the Divine Commandments*, 1376), which actually had a wider circulation in Bohemia than in England,² and influenced Jan Hus's Latin and Czech discussions of the Decalogue.³

The situation in Bohemia was certainly not an isolated phenomenon; rather, it was closely linked to the transformation of devotion throughout Europe during the later Middle Ages. In fact, the prominence of the Ten Commandments is not something one should take for granted; the presence of the Decalogue is less conspicuous than one might expect throughout the history of medieval Christianity. Of course the Decalogue was always important, since it is the one

1 The research project of which the results are presented in this study, “Creative Copying: Miscellanies of Ulrichus Crux de Telcz (d. 1504)” (no. 17–06326S), was supported by the Czech Science Foundation, and carried out at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague. I am very grateful to Michal Dragoun and the anonymous reviewer of the study for their kind help.

2 Loserth J. (ed.), *Johannis Wyclif. Tractatus de mandatis divinis, accedit Tractatus de statu innocentie* (London: 1922).

3 Flajšhans V. (ed.), *Spisy M. Jana Husi č. 1: Expositio Decalogi* (Prague: 1903); Erben K.J. (ed.), *Mistra Jana Husi Sebrané spisy české*, 6 vols. (Prague: 1865) I 52–284 (the longer Czech exposition of the Decalogue: *Výklad Desatera Božího přikázání*) and I 285–287 (the shorter Czech exposition of the Decalogue: *Kratší výklad na Desatera přikázání*).

text given (written) directly by God in the Old Testament, and its validity was confirmed by Jesus (*Mt.* 19:17). Yet, as a text, it poses a number of problems. First, it appears twice in the Bible (*Ex.* 20:1–17 and *Dt.* 5:6–21) but the two accounts are not exactly the same. Second, it is called ‘ten words’ or ‘ten things’ in Hebrew but is not easily separable into ten items, and there were indeed different traditions of the division among Jews and Christians. Further, the text is not very coherent: murder (the fifth commandment), adultery (sixth), and theft (seventh) are prohibited, as well as intending theft and adultery (tenth), but there is no mention of intending murder. Finally, among Christians the Decalogue was often associated with the Jewish law, that is, the law from which Christians should distance themselves and thus it was not especially prominent during the earlier Middle Ages. It was only after the Fourth Lateran council (1215), which put new and universal emphasis on confession, that the Decalogue became an omnipresent text. From this point on, it became foundational in Christian education. Whereas the vices had previously been used to structure confession, the Decalogue now began to take over this function: the precepts were enumerated and possible transgressions against them discussed. Together with the Creed and the Lord’s prayer, the Ten Commandments became a text that every Christian should know by heart. Knowledge and, more importantly, observance of the commandments became a basic sign of adherence to the faith. In the reform environment, the Decalogue played an especially important role: implicitly for Wyclif (d. 1384), and, later, explicitly for Jan Hus (d. 1415). It became the basic practical authority for all Christians, the necessary and sufficient condition of salvation.⁴

The process of the Decalogue’s gradual rise into prominence and the varieties of its interpretation are fascinating but very complex. In the present contribution, I will narrow the subject down to the context of education and will concentrate on Latin mnemonic verses on the Decalogue, transmitted in late medieval Bohemia. Since there is a huge amount of unedited material, I will restrict the discussion here to verses that treat the ten precepts together with the ten plagues of Egypt. Due to this choice, the essay will, rather than contributing

4 A comprehensive history of the Decalogue in the Middle Ages has yet to be written. For useful insights, see: Smith L., *The Ten Commandments: Interpreting the Bible in the Medieval World*, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions 175 (Leiden: 2014). On the Decalogue among Lollards, see: Somerset F., *Feeling like Saints. Lollard Writings after Wyclif* (Ithaca, NY: 2014), esp. chap. 2: “God’s Law: Loving, Learning and Teaching” 63–98; and Hornbeck J.P. – Lahey S.E. – Somerset F. (eds.), *Wycliffite Spirituality*, Classics in Western Spirituality (New York: 2013). For the early modern context, see: Bast R.J., *Honor your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, c. 1400–1600*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought 71 (Leiden: 1997).

to our understanding of the reform and of the transformation of the interpretation of the Decalogue, show how it was incorporated into catechetical and other types of texts aimed at a wider public during the later Middle Ages.

2 Commandments and Plagues

Although it may seem surprising to find the two Old Testament lists of ten items linked, this practice proves to have been widespread throughout the Middle Ages. The explicit connection was already made by the Church Fathers. The most influential treatise was Augustine's *Sermo de decem plagis Egyptiorum et decem praeceptis legis* (*Sermon on the Ten plagues of Egypt and Ten Commandments of the Law*).⁵ In the *Sermo*, for example, those who disobey their parents are linked with dog-flies, because it is dog-like behaviour not to 'know' (not to show deference toward) one's parents. In his treatment, Augustine switches the order of the fifth and the sixth precepts, thus adultery comes before murder and is linked to the cattle, whereas murder is associated with boils. The switch was probably intentional, although all these associations sound rather random to us today, especially because the plagues become gradually harsher, culminating with the deaths of the firstborn, whereas the commandments seem to move from the most to the least serious, ending with the prohibition against coveting a neighbour's property.

Many later authors took over the same comparison.⁶ Augustine's influence can be proved because the authors almost invariably keep the wrong order of the commandments. The two lists of ten are sometimes linked also to the ten strings of the psalter—a tradition begun by Augustine as well. It is clear that for Augustine and his followers the connection was not merely a formal one; for them the commandments and the plagues were closely tied to each other and defined each other. In his sermon, Augustine argued that those who trans-

5 Lambot C. (ed.), *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Sermones de Vetere Testamento*, CCSL 41 (Turnhout: 1961). (Also in: *Patrologiae Latinae cursus completus*, vol. 46, cols. 945–960). The text was known in late medieval Bohemia, too. It survives, for example, in MS Prague, National Library, v G 19, fol. 254v–256v (written in Bohemia, during the first half of the fifteenth century, preserved at the College of the Czech Nation of Prague University; see: www.manuscriptorium.com). Augustine's text was copied in almost exactly the same form by Caesarius of Arles (cf. *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 103, 407–413).

6 Among many others, see Peter Lombard, or Rabanus Maurus, Stephen Langton and William of Auxerre, see: Smith L., "Who is my Mother? Honouring Parents in the Medieval Exegesis of the Ten Commandments", in Leyser C. – Smith L. (eds.), *Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval Europe, 400–1400, Essays presented to Henrietta Leyser* (Farnham: 2011) 157.

gress the precepts suffer from the spiritual counterparts to the corresponding plagues.⁷ On the other hand, Honorius Augustodunensis (d. 1150 or 1151) claimed that the precepts are the remedies for the plagues.⁸ The two interpretations, however, were not seen as contradictory: for example, in *Pauca problesmata de enigmatibus ex tomis canonicis* (*Several Inquiries on Secrets Taken from the Canonical Volumes*), a curious dialogue dating from eighth-century Ireland and clearly dependent on Augustine, the treatment of the Decalogue begins:

Interrogatio: Cur decem dictauit praecepta et non plus?

Responsio: Propter decem plagis Aegyptiorum quae fecit propter illos.

Interrogatio: Cur ibi decem plagae et hic decem praecepta memorantur?

Responsio: Ideo quia in illis erant uulnera, in istis medicamenta.

Question: Why did He dictate ten precepts and not more?

Response: Because of the ten plagues of Egypt which He made because of them.

Question: Why are there ten plagues remembered there, and ten commandments here?

Response: Because in those there were wounds, in these remedies.

And, after the description of the individual precepts, a similar question is asked once again:

Interrogatio: Cur decem uerba, non plus non minus?

Responsio: Quia pro illis deus decem plagis Aegyptum percussit.

Question: Why ten words, no more, no less?

Response: Because according to those [ten], God struck Egypt with ten plagues.⁹

7 'Arbitror ergo omnes qui decem legis praecepta contemnunt et non obseruant spiritaliter pati ea quae aegyptii corporaliter passi sunt' ('I am therefore convinced that all those who disregard and do not observe the Ten Commandments of the law will suffer spiritually what the Egyptians suffered physically'). Available at <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/augustine/serm8.shtml> (August 18, 2015).

8 Augustodunensis Honorius, *De decem plagis Aegypti spiritualiter*, *Patrologia Latina* 172, 265–270 at 268: 'Harum decem plagarum medicina sunt decem praecepta [...]' ('The medicine to these ten plagues are the ten precepts').

9 MacGinty G. (ed.), *Pauca problesmata de enigmatibus ex tomis canonicis. Praefatio et libri de Pentateucho Moysi* (textus breuior), *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 173 (Turnhout: 2000) 219–289; the English translation here and below is mine, unless noted otherwise.

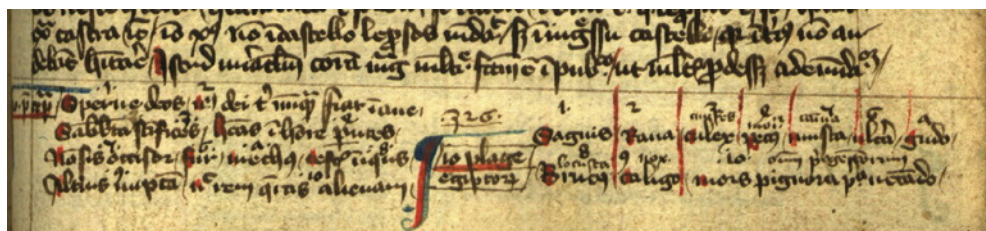


FIGURE 8.1 *Matheus Beran* (Augustinian Canon from Roudnice and Labem, d. 1461), juxtaposition of the list of the Ten Commandments with the list of the ten plagues of Egypt within a sermon collection compiled by him, MS Prague, Library of the National Museum, XVI E 11, fol. 312r, lower margin (1417).

IMAGE © LIBRARY OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM.

The argument is clearly circular: there are Ten Commandments because of the ten plagues for which the commandments serve as remedies, and, since there were Ten Commandments, God sent ten plagues to punish the Egyptians. In any case, the two ways of linking the commandments and the plagues seem to have been merely two ways of stressing the interdependence of the two lists, and they may, as in this text, appear side by side.

Besides the narrative treatments, a number of medieval manuscripts feature the simple juxtaposition of the two lists—the enumeration of the Ten Commandments is accompanied by the enumeration of the ten plagues. This occurs, to provide an example from Bohemia, in a marginal note that forms part of a sermon collection compiled by Matheus Beran (d. 1461)—an Augustinian canon of Roudnice nad Labem (Raudnitz, c. fifty kilometres north of Prague)—in 1417 (MS Prague, Library of the National Museum, XVI E 11, fol. 312r [Fig. 8.1]).¹⁰ Both the enumerations are condensed, and, in fact, they are in verse. The verses on the Decalogue read:

Sperne deos, nomen dei tibi numquam fiat inane
 Sabbata sanctificies, habeas in honore parentes
 Non sis occisor, fur, mechus, testis iniquus,
 Alterius nuptam nec rem queras alienam.

Hate [other] gods, never let the name of God be vain to you
 Treat the Sabbath holy, keep parents in honour.

10 For a full description of the manuscript, see: Dragoun M., “Soupis rukopisů” (Manuscript catalogue), in Doležalová L. – Dragoun M. – Eberssonová A. (eds.), *Ubi est finis huius libri deus scit. Středověká knihovna augustiniánů kanovníků v Roudnici nad Labem* (The late medieval library of Augustinian canons in Roudnice nad Labem) (Prague: 2015) 478–479.

Do not be a murderer, thief, adulterer, unfair witness.

Do not desire the wife of another man or the property of another.

This is a variant of probably the most popular verses on the Decalogue.¹¹ The verses on the ten plagues are even more condensed:

Sanguis, rana, culex, pecus, musca, ulcera, grando,

Brucus, caligo, mors pignora prima necando.

Blood, frog, gnat, cattle, fly, ulcers, hailstorm,

Locust, darkness, death killing the first children.

These verses, again, appear in a number of variants. It seems that the wording of such condensed verses was not quite fixed, the scribes—just like Matheus Beran here—often add explanatory interlinear glosses. Subsequently, other scribes sometimes decide to integrate the words from the glosses in the verses themselves. As a result, there are many variants of the same text.¹²

One can also find mnemonic verses on the Decalogue directly followed or preceded by verses on the ten plagues, as in Prague, Metropolitan Chapter Library, A 27, fol. 414r, written 1468–1470 in Bohemia. The manuscript contains Nicholas of Lyra's *Postilla*, as well as a closing miscellany.¹³ Furthermore, there are visual schemes linking the items, both in manuscripts and in early prints.¹⁴ Among the Czech manuscripts, there is MS Prague, National Library, XIV E 31, composed in the mid-fourteenth century by Oldřich Kříž z Telče (Ulricus Crux de Telcz, d. 1504), an Augustinian canon from Třeboň (Wittingau, c. 140 kilometres south of Prague). On fol. 322r of the manuscript, a visual scheme can be found; the plagues are listed on the left, the precepts in the middle, and the ways in which people transgress the precepts (*Decem plebis abusiones*) on

11 Inc. 'Sperne deos, fugito periuria'. Cf. Newhauser R. – Bejczy I., *A Supplement to Morton W. Bloomfield et al., 'Incipits of Latin Works on the Virtues and Vices, 1100–1500 A.D.', Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia* 50 (Turnhout: 2008) no. 5797, p. 328.

12 I have described this process in more detail in another case study: Doležalová L., "Verses on the Effects of the Eucharist: Memory and the Material Text in Utraquist Miscellanies", in Soukup P. – Van Dussen M. (eds.), *Religious Controversy in Europe 1378–1536. Textual Transmission and Networks of Readership* (Turnhout: 2013) 105–136.

13 Podlaha A., *Soupis rukopisů knihovny metropolitní kapituly české*, 2 vols. (Prague: 1922) I 22–24.

14 See Thum V., *Die Zehn Gebote für die ungelehrten Leut'. Der Dekalog in der Graphik des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, Kunstwissenschaftliche Studien 136 (Munich: 2006) esp. 41–51.

the right [Fig. 8.2]).¹⁵ Again, a closer look at the scheme reveals that both the list of the plagues and that of the commandments are in fact in verse. The verses on the plagues (inc.: ‘Prima rubens unda’) are the most popular medieval verses on this topic, those on the Decalogue (inc.: ‘Unum crede Deum ne iures vana per ipsum’) are yet another version of the verses used by Beran. This is a typical example of a visual scheme linking the Ten Commandments to the ten plagues.¹⁶

Veronika Thum shows that out of fifty-seven illustrated Decalogue cycles produced before the mid-sixteenth century, twenty-two are combined with the Egyptian plagues.¹⁷ The combinations are of various types, the texts are never stable and frequently rather obscure, but it is clear from the surviving material that the two lists were associated frequently and naturally.¹⁸

3 Verses Combining the Commandments and the Plagues

As far as the verses that combine the two lists are concerned, I have so far found three different versions. The oldest of them is a poem attributed to Williram of Ebersberg, the most widely copied version was written by Peter Riga, and the last one is attributed to Christian of Lilienfeld.

Williram of Ebersberg (1010–1085)

The poem attributed to Williram of Ebersberg is edited under the title *Quomodo decem praecepta decem plagis convenient* (*How the Ten Commandments fit the*

¹⁵ The manuscript along with a description is accessible at www.manuscriptorium.com.

¹⁶ For a much more representative manuscript copy of the same scheme, see e.g.: Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS 416, fol. 4v, at <http://brbl-archive.library.yale.edu/exhibitions/speculum/4v-ten-commandments.html> (August 15, 2015). Here, under the scheme, two verses on the importance of keeping the commandments are included: ‘Si praecepta decem serves, te iustificabis / infernique necem vitans celos penetrabis’ (‘If you preserve the Ten Commandments, you will do justice to yourself, avoiding the death of hell you will enter heaven’). The same scheme (with some minor variants) is also found in ms. Vienna, Austrian National Library, Pal. Lat. 12465 (fifteenth century), fol. 77r. For an even more sophisticated representation on a single leaf woodcut dated ca. 1465–1480, see: Thum, *Die Zehn Gebote* 44, fig. 9.

¹⁷ Thum, *Die Zehn Gebote* 50, 65–67. See also: Laun C., *Bildkatechese im Spätmittelalter: allegorische und typologische Auslegungen des Dekalogs* (Munich: 1979).

¹⁸ For further examples, see especially: Honemann V., “Zehn Gebote und Ägyptische Plagen”, in *Verfasserlexikon. Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters*, vol. 10 (Berlin: 1999) cols. 1503–1510, with further bibliography.

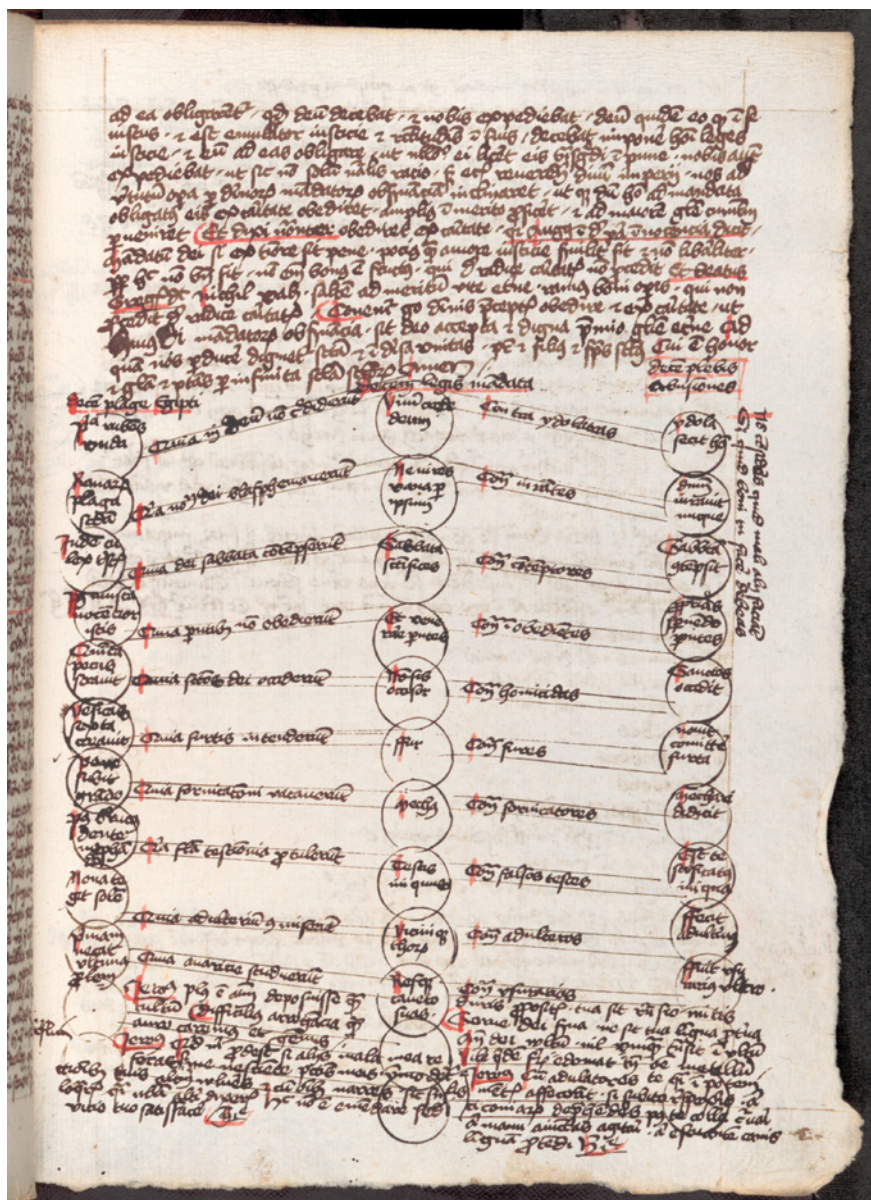


FIGURE 8.2 Anonymous, scribe: Oldřich Kříž z Telče (Ulricus Crux de Telcz, Augustinian canon of Třeboň, d. 1504), a visual scheme combining the ten plagues (left column) with the Ten Commandments (middle column) and the Decem plebis abusiones (right column). MS Prague, National Library, XIV E 31, fol. 322r (mid-fifteenth century). IMAGE © NATIONAL LIBRARY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC.

ten plagues), as the thirteenth poem within his collection of sixteen poems, known as the *Cantica latina*.¹⁹ Williram of Ebersberg was a student of Lanfranc, and was active in Paris, Bamberg and Fulda. He belonged to the circle of the emperor Henry III, and later became the abbot of the Benedictine monastery of Ebersberg, where he lived for thirty-seven years. The *Cantica latina* have not been much studied, especially since they are overshadowed by another work of Williram's: a commentary on the *Song of Songs*, accompanied by a German translation of the text as well as a German commentary (inspired by Haimo of Auxerre), and a Latin paraphrase of the Song of Songs.²⁰ The paraphrase, which is in rhymed verses, reveals Williram's interest in retelling the Bible, a rare phenomenon at his time.²¹

The verses combining the precepts and the plagues have also been attributed to Engelbert of Admont (abbot of Admont, 1297–1327).²² They have been edited by M. Dittrich:

Prima rubens unda: Deitatem mens cole munda! (Non habebis deos alienos!)

Rana sequens multa: Facias non ydola stulta! (Non facies tibi sculptile!)

Post scinifes, plane: Deus haut sumatur inane! (Non assumes nomen in vanum!)

Quarta venit musca: Non sabbata crimine fusca! (Memento ut diem sabbati!)

Quinta ferit pecora: Quibus es generatus honora! (Honora patrem et matrem!)

Sextaque vesice: Non occidas inimice! (Non ocides!)

Septima fit grando: Non pecces luxuriando! (Non mechaberis!)

19 Freher Marquard, *In Willeram abbatis Cant. notae, variae lectiones, supplementa*, ed. G.G. Vögelin (Worms: 1631) 31; and Schupp V., *Studien zu Williram von Ebersberg* (Bern: 1979) 178.

20 For recent studies, see: Schützeichel R. – Meineke B., *Die älteste Überlieferung von Willirams Kommentar des Hohen Liedes. Edition, Übersetzung, Glossar, Studien zum Althochdeutschen 39* (Göttingen: 2001); Lähnemann H. – Rupp M. (eds. – trans.), *Williram von Ebersberg, Expositio in Cantica Canticorum und das Commentarium in Cantica Canticorum Haimos von Auxerre* (Berlin: 2004); and Bohnert N., *Zur Textkritik von Willirams Kommentar des Hohen Liedes. Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Autorvarianten, Texte und Textgeschichte 56* (Tübingen: 2006).

21 Cf. Doležalová L. – Visi T. (eds.), *Retelling the Bible: Literary, Historical, and Social Contexts* (Frankfurt am Main: 2011).

22 Cf. Fowler G.B., *Intellectual Interests of Engelbert of Admont*, *Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law 530* (New York: 1947) 216–217.

Deinde locusta datur: Nil furtim diripiat! (Non furtum facies!)
 Nona nox terret: A vero nullus aberret! (Non loquaris contra proximum
 falsum testimonium!)
 Mors ferit in decima: Frenetur cupido dira! (Non concupisces rem
 proximi!)²³

The first [plague] turns the water red: Clear the mind, worship the deity!
 (Thou shall not have other gods!)
 The following [is a plague of] many frogs: Do not make stupid idols!
 (Thou shall not make effigies for yourself!)
 Afterwards lice. Plainly: God should not be taken in vain at all! (Thou
 shall not take the name [of God] in vain!)
 The fourth one: the fly comes: Do not darken the Sabbath by crime!
 (Remember so that [you keep] the Sabbath!)
 The fifth one strikes the cattle: Honour those to whom you were born!
 (Honour [your] mother and father!)
 And the sixth one, boils: Do not kill in enmity! (Thou shall not murder!)
 The seventh, a hailstorm: Do not sin by indulging excessively! (Thou shall
 not commit adultery!)
 Thence the locust is given: Nothing should be seized in secret! (Thou
 shall not steal!)
 The ninth, the night terrifies: No one should deviate from the truth! (Thou
 shall not speak a false testimony against your neighbour!)
 Death strikes in the tenth one: Odious desire should be bridled! (Thou
 shall not covet the property of your neighbour!)

The following poems (nos. 14 and 15) continue the associative mode: the former links the plagues to vices,²⁴ the latter the ten chords of the psalter to 'killing' (i.e. overcoming) the ten vices.²⁵ The fact that the verses by Williram of Ebersberg have the same incipit as the most popular poem on the ten plagues (inc.: 'Prima rubens unda') suggests a possible link between the two—Williram probably adjusted the plague verses in his poem.

23 Dittrich M., "Sechzehn lateinische Gedichte Willirams von Ebersberg", *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 76, 1/2 (1939) 45–63. The study includes the text edition on p. 61, made according to ms. Munich, BSB, Cgm. 10 (from Ebersberg), fol. 7r.

24 Inc.: 'Spreto factore rea mens fit foeda cruore [...] prima ruunt scelerum; spernas labentia rerum'.

25 Inc.: 'Cantas Psalterio nova cantica sub decachordo (Ps. 143, 9) [...] quae duo coniuncta complent legalia cuncta'.

The form of the poem is curious: each verse is divided into two rhyming halves—the first one describing the plague, the second one the precept—but the connection between them is not quite clear; while the plague is described in the present tense as something that simply takes place, the precept is in an imperative form, and the two are merely juxtaposed, not truly linked to each other. Perhaps because some of the commandments sound a little obscure in this form, each of them is also presented in a clear way (with wording closer to the Vulgate) at the end of each line. Interestingly, the division of the commandments is not the usual one: here, as with Origen, the idols form a separate commandment (the second one), and thus the Catholic commandments nine and ten, coveting another's wife and coveting another's property, are merged into one.

Thirteen surviving manuscripts of the poem have been identified;²⁶ these verses can be found both as part of the whole collection and by themselves. Another manuscript, which is not noted in any of the repertories and which I found by chance, is Prague, Metropolitan Chapter Library, H 10, written in and after 1416 in Bohemia. It contains, among other texts, the *Expositio Decalogi* by Jan Hus (d. 1415). On fol. 237r only the verses combining the precepts and the plagues are copied after a commentary to the *Carmen Paschale* by Sedulius.²⁷ This copy includes the verses but lacks the precepts phrased in a clear way at the end of each line. This chance find suggests that many more manuscripts have yet to be discovered.

One of the manuscripts, Vienna, Austrian National Library, Pal. Lat. 4890, fol. 118v (fifteenth century), also originated in Bohemia,²⁸ contains primarily sermon drafts on the Epistles and Gospels for the year composed by Andreas de Broda (Ondřej z Brodu (d. 1427), on fols. 11r–118r) and also the *Passio Christi* by Jan Hus (fols. 121r–165r).²⁹ The manuscript includes a version of the verses slightly different from those in Dittrich's edition,³⁰ and it lacks the last part—the ends of each line that appear in brackets in the edition. Moreover, it has interlinear

26 Cf. Stegmüller F., *Repertorium biblicum*, no. 8379; and Rothschild, *BAMAT* 16 (2006) no. 3967.

27 They are not described in the catalogue entry; cf. Podlaha A. *Soupis rukopisů knihovny metropolitní kapituly české*, 2 vols. (Prague: 1922) II 123–124.

28 There are Czech words included, e.g., on f. 120r. There are also notes written in the sixteenth century by the Czech owners.

29 It is attributed to a certain Andreas in the manuscript.

30 The differences are minor, except for the last line, which reads: 'Mors ferit in decimo: frenetur dira cupido' ('Death strikes in the tenth one [here masculine rather than feminine]: Odious desire should be bridled! [change of word order]').

glosses that summarize the precepts, but in a different way—not only does the wording differ but there is also no separate treatment of the idols.³¹ Thus it seems very likely that this section (the last part of each verse that is included in brackets in the edition) was not included in the original version of the poem but it was an independent explanatory gloss. As such, it was sometimes copied together with the poem, while on other occasions the scribe might improvise or exclude these addenda altogether. In this manuscript, the verses open a section with a variety of mnemonic verses. There are also additional verses on the Decalogue,³² as well as verses on vices, sins, beatitudes, the Creed, the Passion, and many other subjects.³³

Peter Riga (d. 1209)

By far the most widely copied version was, however, the one by Peter Riga, which is found within his *Aurora*, a very popular versified Bible.³⁴ The verses read as follows:

Est homo sanguineus cui non colitur Deus unus
 Rana loquax heresis reprobat nomen Deitatis
 Ut sciniphes errant, qui sabbata sacra prophanant
 Ille cynomia fit, qui patres ut canis odit.
 Fit pecus, et moritur, quasi brutus adulter habetur
 Fervor vesicae fervens furor est homicidae
 Fur rapit exterius, Deus illum grandinat intus
 Dente locusta nocet, falsus testis male mordet

31 They read: 'unum deum ex toto corde tuo et ex tota mente tua; unum crede deum; non sumes nomen dei tui in vanum; memento ut diem sabbati sanctifices; honora patrem tuum et matrem tuam; (nothing on murder); non adulterabis; non furtum facies; non falsum testimonium dices; non concupisces rem proximi' ('trust one God, one God from your whole heart and your whole mind; you will not take the name of your God in vain; remember to keep holy the sabbath day; honour your father and your mother; you will not commit adultery; you will not commit theft; you will not pronounce a false testimony; you will not covet your neighbour's property').

32 Fol. 119r, inc.: 'Unum crede deum nec vana iura per ipsum'.

33 On fol. 31r, one of the most popular Latin mnemonic poems on the Decalogue, the *Sperne deos, fugito periuria*, appears at the end of the draft of a sermon, *Plenitudo legis est dilectio* for the fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

34 Beichner P.E. (ed.), *Aurora. Petri Rigae Biblia Versificata. A Verse Commentary on the Bible* (Notre Dame: 1965). A new critical edition is currently being prepared by Greti Dinkova-Bruun.

Cor patiens tenebras rapit uxores alienas
Prima perit proles, male si fore quis cupit haeres.³⁵

The man who does not worship the one God is bloodied.
A chatterbox frog, [he] rejects the name of the deity.
Those who violate the sacred Sabbath wander around like lice.
He will become a dog-fly who hates his parents like a dog.
He will become cattle and will die [who] is behaving as a stupid adulterer.
The heat of the boil, boiling rage, is for the murderer.
The thief snatches from without; God makes a hailstorm from within.
Locust harms with its teeth; the false witness badly bites.
The permissive heart takes other men's wives in darkness.
The first offspring perishes if one desires to become heir in an evil way.

Thanks to the *Aurora*, these verses are widespread throughout Europe. In the *Aurora*, they appear within the treatment of the plagues and are directly preceded by other mnemonics to the plagues, two very condensed verses (a variant to those used by Matheus Beran),³⁶ and five other, very popular verses sometimes attributed to Hildebert of Lavardin (d. 1133).³⁷ Each of these three brief poems sometimes also appear separately. The list of the plagues in figure 8.2 is actually the latter poem, attributed to Hildebert.

In addition, copied independently of the *Aurora*, the above quoted verses, in which the plagues and precepts are combined, appear in at least nine manuscripts, and more will surely surface.³⁸ For example, in a manuscript from York Minster (xvi Q 14) from the early thirteenth century, the verses appear within a

35 The text is taken from Beichner with some corrections based on manuscript evidence.

36 'Sanguis, rana, culex, musce, moriens pecus, ulcer / Grando, locuste, nox, prius orta necans' ('Blood, frogs, lice, flies, dying livestock, boil / thunderstorm, locusts, night, killing those born earlier').

37 Scott A.B., ed., *Hildebertus. Carmina minora* (Leipzig: 1969), 21 (n° 34), with the inc.: 'Prima rubens unda, ranae tabesque secunda', in PL 171, col. 1436, Hauréau B., *Les mélanges poétiques d'Hildebert* (Paris: 1882) 121–122. The whole reads: 'Prima rubens unda ranarum plaga secunda / Inde culex tristis post musca nocentior istis / Quinta pecus stravit, vesicam sexta curavit / Pone subit grando post brucus dente nefando / Nona tegit solem primam necat ultima prolem' ('The first turns the water red, the second plague [is one] of frogs / thence sad lice, after a fly more destructive than those / by the fifth the livestock suffers, the sixth one regards the boils / then comes the hailstorm, after the locust with abominable teeth / the ninth one covers the sun, the last one kills the firstborn').

38 Cf. Walther H., *Initia carminum*, no. 5693, Ker N., *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries* II, 745 (3.43) and IV, 779 (7m)—Indexes and Addenda 2002, p. 328, *In principio* database.

poetic anthology of 103 biblical poems.³⁹ Here they are preceded, again, by the most popular poem on the ten plagues,⁴⁰ and two poems on the Decalogue.⁴¹

The difference from Williram's poem lies in a much tighter connection between the plagues and the commandments: the plagues are clearly presented as punishment for transgressing the precepts. Augustine is an apparent source: adultery comes before murder as the fifth commandment. Also, the links between plagues and transgressions are explained: the frogs talk too much, just like the person who takes the name of God in vain; the locust bites, as does the false witness; failure to honour one's parents is dog-like, and the transgressor is therefore punished with dog-flies et cetera. The poem as a whole is far from easy to understand. It cannot be used to learn the plagues and the commandments, only to remember them once they have been learnt.

Christian of Lilienfeld (?; d. before 1332)

Finally, there is yet another version, which, to my knowledge, survives in only two manuscripts: Lilienfeld, Stiftsbibliothek, 145, fol. 161r (ca. 1319–1323) and Prague, National Library, I G 39, fol. 82v (from 1360–1380). In the Lilienfeld manuscript, written in the eponymous Cistercian monastery, the poem appears within a subsection of verses attributed to Christian of Lilienfeld (Christianus Campililiensis, prior of Lilienfeld in 1326–1328) [Fig. 8.3]:

Decem precepta et decem plage
 Unus adoretur Deus et sanguis minuetur
 vanum vitetur⁴² nomen nec rana timetur
 sabbata sacrentur per qua cynifes abigentur
 patris honorentur carnes musceque prementur
 si non occides peccorum nil morte relides
 non mechando vides sic vulnera turgida rides
 cum non furatur nec grandinis igne tonatur
 si non testatur res facta locusta fugatur
 fratris nolle thorum tenebras illustrat amorum
 nec res velle thorum salvat primogenitorum.

39 The verses are copied on fols. 52r–52v. For more details, see: Dinkova-Bruun G., “Medieval Latin Poetic Anthologies (VII): The Biblical Anthology from York Minster Library (MS XVI Q 14)”, *Mediaeval Studies* 64, 1 (2002) 61–109.

40 Inc.: ‘Prima rubens unda’, cf. Walther, *Initia* no. 14595.

41 Inc.: ‘Ecce decem cordis resonat custodia legis’, cf. Walther, *Initia* no. 5074; and inc. ‘Disce deum colere’, cf. Walther, *Initia*, no. 4527.

42 In this manuscript: *videtur*.

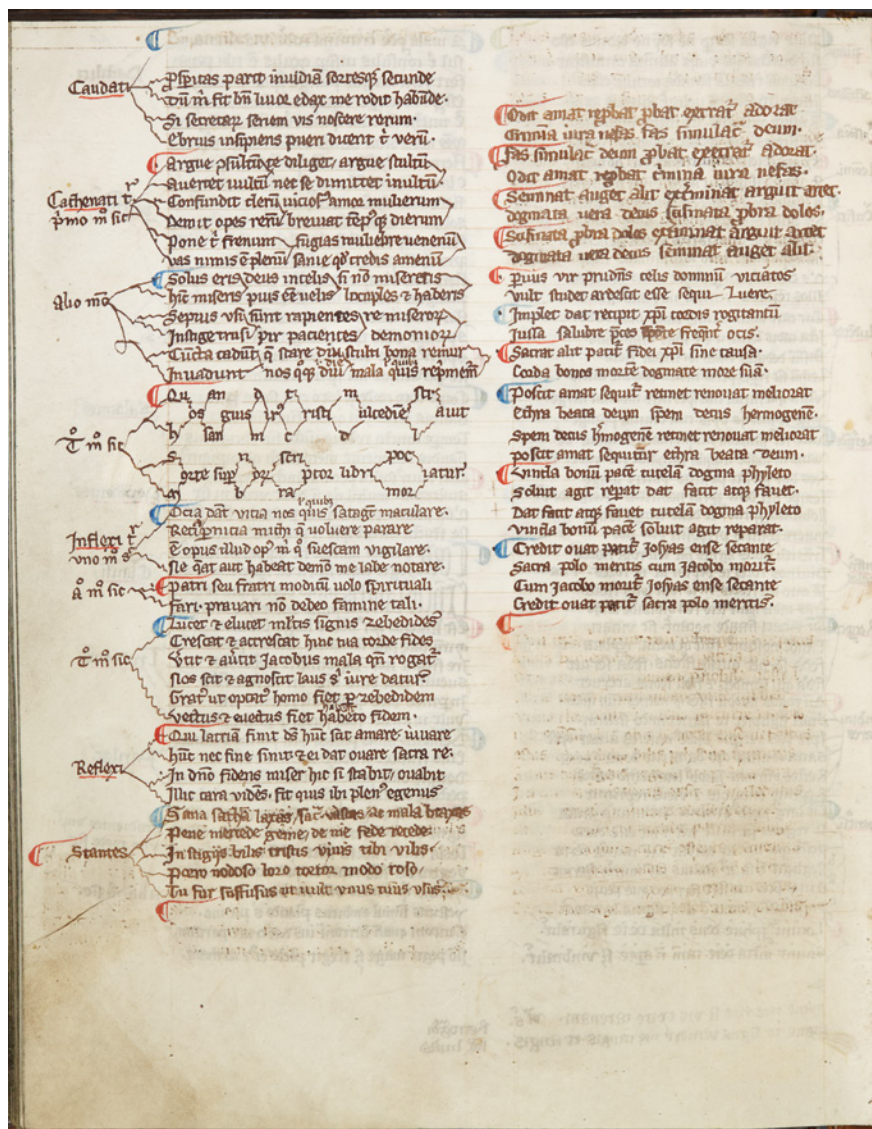


FIGURE 8.3A Christian of Lilienfeld (uncertain), verses combining the Ten Commandments with the ten plagues of Egypt, MS Lilienfeld, Library of the monastery, 145, fol. 160v (ca. 1319–1323).

IMAGE © STIFTSBIBLIOTHEK LILIENFELD.

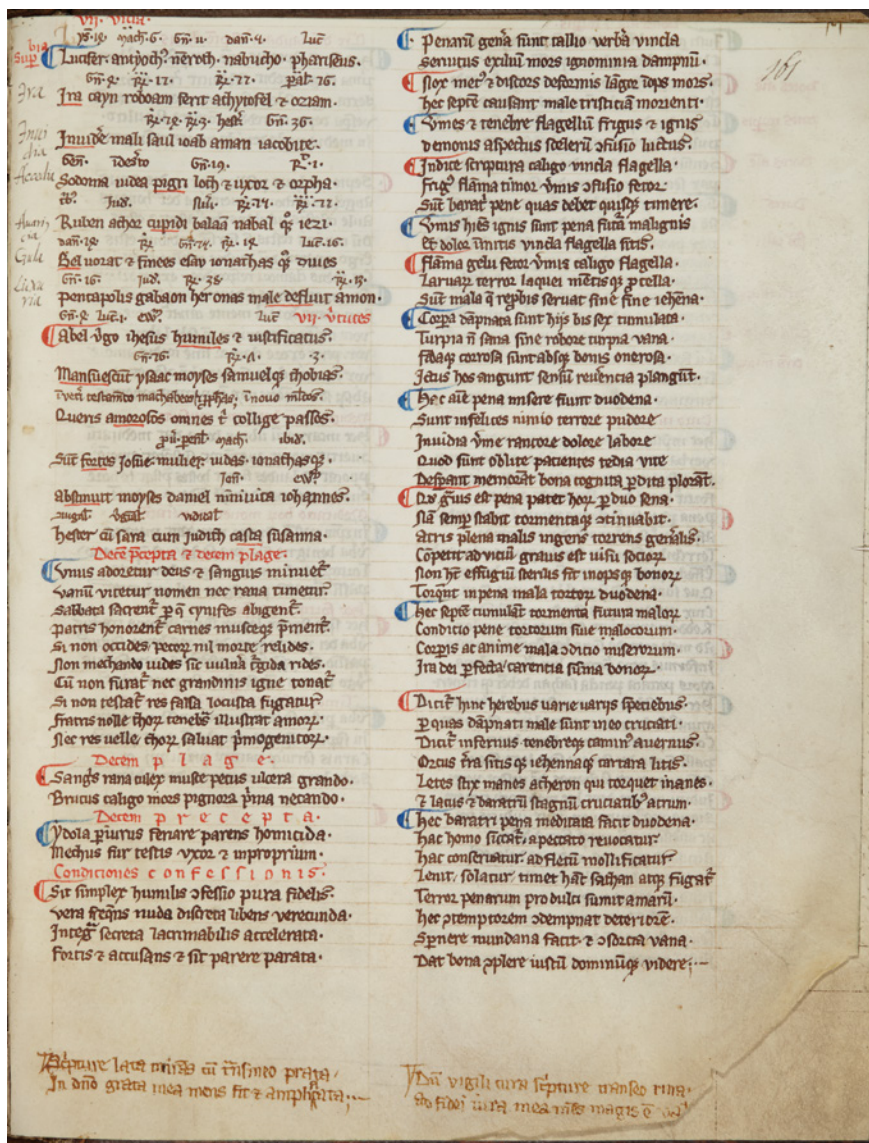


FIGURE 8.3B *A Christian of Lilienfeld (uncertain), verses combining the Ten Commandments with the ten plagues of Egypt, MS Lilienfeld, Library of the monastery, 145, fol. 161r (ca. 1319–1323).*

IMAGE © STIFTSBIBLIOTHEK LILIENFELD.

Ten precepts and ten plagues

One God should be worshipped and blood will be shed.

Let the vain name be avoided, lest the frogs be feared.

Sabbath should be kept holy, thus are the lice driven away.

The flesh of the parents should be honoured and dog-flies shall be suppressed.

If you do not kill, you shall lose nothing by the death of the cattle.

By not committing adultery, thus see, at swollen wounds you shall laugh.

When there is no stealing, it does not thunder the hail-storm's fire.

If there is no witnessing about the deeds done, the locust may be chased away.⁴³

Not to wish the bed of [your] brother illuminates the darkness of desires.

And not to wish [another's] property saves the bed of the firstborn.

Christian of Lilienfeld might very well have been the author of these verses since he wrote a number of liturgical, spiritual and moral poems, most of them based on the Bible. Among his most famous works, there is a *Planctus* and also *Concordantie Veteris et Novi Testamenti* (*Concordances of the Old and the New Testament*) in hexameters,⁴⁴ which were used as a model for another famous work made in Lilienfeld—the *Concordantie caritatis* authored by Ulrich of Lilienfeld in 1340–1350, which survives in a number of copies including MS Lilienfeld, Stiftsbibliothek, 151. There, on the versos of fols. 239–248, the Ten Commandments appear with their corresponding plagues.⁴⁵

The Prague manuscript with the verses seems to be more corrupt, but a rubric introduces the poem there: 'Remedia contra X plagas sunt X precepta' ('The remedies to the ten plagues are the Ten Commandments') [Fig. 8.4]. Thus, this version conceives of the precepts as a medicine, and indeed, the verses stress that if the precepts are kept, the plagues will be avoided. While thus twisting the biblical order of events and being far from clear by itself without additional explanation, this poem is the only one of the three that preserves the order and division of the commandments usual in the medieval West.

43 Or possibly: if there is no witnessing, it is a done thing (i.e. it is sure) that the locust is avoided.

44 For more, see: Zechmeister W. (ed.), *Christani Campiliensis Opera Poetica*, 2 vols., Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis XIX A–B (Turnhout: 1992); and Worstbrock F.J., "Christan von Lilienfeld", in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, vol. 1 (Berlin: 1978) 1202–1208.

45 See <http://www.cisto.at/stift/ulrich.html>.

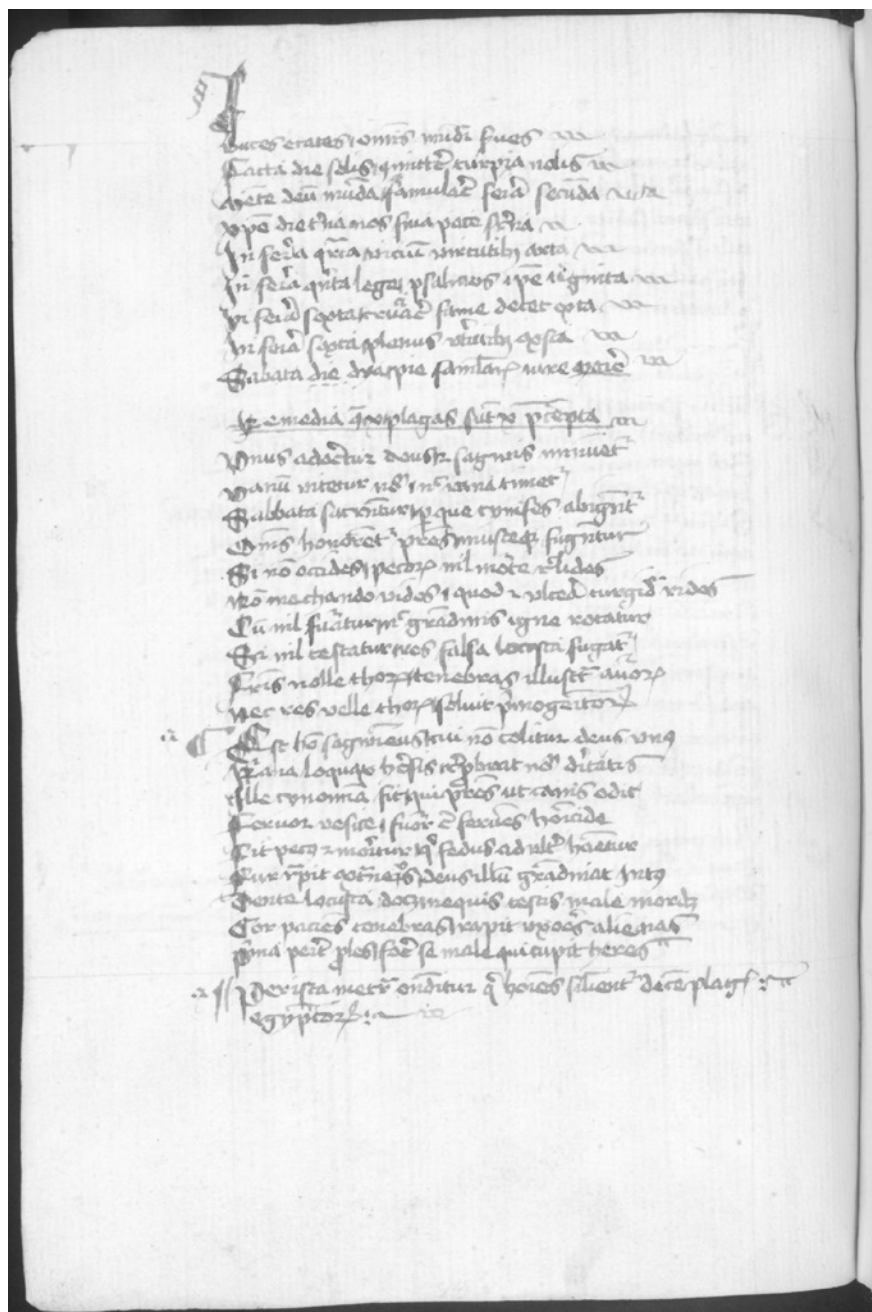


FIGURE 8.4 Christian of Lilienfeld (uncertain), verses combining the Ten Commandments with the ten plagues of Egypt, MS Prague, National Library, I G 39, fol. 82v (1360–1380).

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Yet, since this last version is the least diffused, it would seem that the readers were not overly concerned with maintaining an accurate correspondence with the Bible: they do not seem to mind the wrong order or wrong division in the verses that are supposed to help them memorize the material. I have made the same observation on the basis of the manuscript transmission of another medieval biblical mnemonic poem, the *Summarium biblie*, which was extremely popular and yet is rarely found in a form that makes it seem usable as a mnemonic aid.⁴⁶

The pattern of development of medieval memory aids can be traced in these verses as well: while the verses by Williram are rather easy, those by Peter Riga are more difficult, and the verses by Christian of Lilienfeld are even more complicated to understand. As I have argued elsewhere,⁴⁷ medieval mnemonic aids tended to become shorter and were increasingly subject to distortion, to such an extent that in the later Middle Ages they became incomprehensible without explanation. This tendency may be linked to the wide use of the technique of the art of memory in the late Middle Ages.

The context in which the poem appears in MS Lilienfeld, Stiftsbibliothek 145, is both poetic and catechetical: it is preceded by familiar versified lists of vices and virtues exemplified by biblical characters (inc.: 'Lucifer, Antiochus' and 'Abel, virgo'), and followed by equally familiar verses on the ten plagues (*Decem plage*, 2 verses, inc.: 'Sanguis, rana, culex'—the verses used by Matheus Beran, see above), the Ten Commandments (*Decem precepta*, 2 verses, inc.: 'Idola periurus'), and the conditions for confession (*Conditiones confessionis*, 4 verses, inc.: 'Sit simplex humilis confessio'). The Prague manuscript is more miscellaneous; it contains sermons, a variety of short moral, biblical and contemplative texts, a poem on the city of Prague,⁴⁸ as well as notes by a student from Cologne, possibly the owner of the manuscript.⁴⁹ Our verses are preceded by eight further verses giving moral instruction for every day of the week (entitled *Luces etates omnis mundi serves*, inc.: 'Facta die solis, committere turpia nolis'), and followed by those of Peter Riga but switching the order of his fifth and sixth lines, clearly to restore the correct order of the commandments. This

46 Doležalová L., *Obscurity and Memory in Late Medieval Manuscript Culture: The Case of the 'Summarium Biblie'*, *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* 29 (Krems: 2012).

47 Doležalová, *Obscurity and Memory* 141–145.

48 Inc.: 'Ach Praga doleas numquam caritura dolore'; cf. Walther, *Initia* no. 288.

49 Cf. fol. 13v: 'Dilectis suis parentibus Henrico et Gertrudi Colonie commorantibus Johannes studens Pragensis salutem et obedienciam filialem' ('To his beloved parents Henry and Gertrude staying in Cologne, John, a student of Prague [sends] greetings and filial obedience').

simple adjustment places the prohibition of murder before that of adultery, so that the order is the same as in the Vulgate; but this results in changing the order of the plagues: the plague of boils now precedes the death of cattle. Both the manuscripts place a clear emphasis on moral instruction, and both include subsections on the virtues and vices and confession, as well as the Bible.⁵⁰

This was the most frequent manuscript context for this type of composition during the late Middle Ages. In manuscript catalogues, such manuscripts or sections within manuscripts are categorized as devotional, pastoral, catechetical, spiritual or meditational miscellanies. Yet, there are some fixed clusters of texts within these 'miscellanies' and future research will hopefully propose their taxonomy, enabling us to grasp them better, and thus to find more manuscript copies of these brief texts as well. There is no doubt that many of them have so far passed unnoticed.

The verses discussed here are neither the most beautiful nor the most thought-provoking creations of the Middle Ages. Although they shed little light on the transformation of devotion, they form an integral part of devotional literature—a topic difficult to approach and grasp, especially in the late Middle Ages, when these writings are numerous, closely interrelated and not very original. But even the lack of originality—the repetition—has a function: it is a sort of meditation, a rumination that serves to inculcate the basics of the Christian education. These ways in which memory was supported may seem obscure at first, but it was believed that the more striking images would be imprinted into one's heart more deeply—and this might be one of the reasons why the combination of the commandments with the cruel and harsh plagues was so successful and popular: combining the commandments with vivid plague imagery would have facilitated the process of recollection. The primary aim of these verses was neither aesthetic nor hermeneutic, but rather, moral. They were the means used to reform the actual behaviour in the eyes of God and one's fellow men and thus their material aspects—the clumsy, disorganized, incoherent and obscure way of their transmission was of little concern to the medievals.

50 The situation in the Latin context can easily be compared with the German or the English ones, which are surprisingly similar. See e.g.: Salter E., *Popular Reading in English c. 1400–1600* (Manchester: 2012); and Weidenhiller E., *Untersuchungen zur deutschsprachigen katechetischen Literatur des späten Mittelalters. Nach den Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek, Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters* 10 (Munich: 1965).

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The Ten Commandments in Preaching in Late Medieval Poland: ‘Sermo de praeceptis’ from Ms. 3022 at the National Library in Warsaw

Krzysztof Bracha

In the catechetical literature from the end of the Middle Ages, the Decalogue seems to overshadow other sources of religious substance. It was commented on or explained in numerous catechistic textbooks, comprehensive treatises, minor *quaestiones* and sermons. Its content was also taught in prosaic and poetic texts intended for mnemonic purposes and, quite frequently, it was presented in iconography, on murals, tablets, and even stone reliefs. It is precisely during this time that the numerous tablets illustrating the meaning of the Ten Commandments appeared in churches and cloisters with the particular aim of educating the illiterate (for instance, the Ten Commandments tablet from the Blessed Virgin Mary parish church in Gdańsk from c. 1480, and the *Heidelberger Dekalog* from approximately 1455–1458).¹ Dramatic scenes, with simple illustrations contrasting bad and good deeds, were to challenge the believers and encourage them to act according to prescribed Christian standards. Evidence of the Decalogue's privileged position can also be found in normative church sources, particularly in numerous synodal resolutions and in statements by many church writers from the fifteenth century.² In *Epistola de reformatione theologiae*, Jean Gerson, using evocative medical rhetoric, recommended that: ‘Item forte expediret sicut olim tempore quarundam pestilentiarum facultas medicorum composuit tractatulum ad informandum singulos,

- 1 *Heidelberger Dekalog*, MS. Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek Pal. germ. 438. Labuda A.S., “Cnota i grzech w gdańskiej Tablicy Dziesięciorga Przykazań, czyli jak rzeczywistość przedstawienia obrazowego s(po)tyka się z rzeczywistością miasta późnośredniowiecznego”, *Artium Quaestionis* 7 (1995) 65–102; Otto-Michałowska M., *Gotyckie malarstwo tablicowe w Polsce* (Warsaw – Berlin – Budapest: 1982) no. 19; *Die Zehn Gebote. Faksimilie eines Blockbuches, kommentiert von W. Werner* (Dietikon – Zürich: 1971); <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg438/0337>. Cf. Harmening D., “Bildkatechese”, in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 2 (Munich – Zürich: 1983) 153 ff.; Geffcken J. (ed.), *Der Bildercatechismus des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts und catechetischen Hauptstücke in dieser Zeit bis auf Luther* (Leipzig: 1855) illustrations 1–10; Schiller G., *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst*, vol. 4.1 *Die Kirche* (Güttersloh: 1976) 121–134.
- 2 Sawicki J., “Najdawniejsze statuty synodalne poznańskie z rękopisu BOZ 63”, *Studia Źródłoznawcze* 1 (1957) 202, no. 34.

ita fieret per facultatem vel de mandato ejus aliquis tractatulus super punctis principalibus nostrae religionis, et specialiter de praeceptis, ad instructionem simplicium, quibus nullus sermo aut raro fit, aut male fit, especially though, as Gerson clearly emphasized, ‘teaching about the Ten Commandments’ (‘specialiter de praeceptis’).³

Thus, the Decalogue formed the conventional basis of Christian moral teaching. The meaning of the Decalogue as a foundation for the Christian ethical norms was emphasized by many late-medieval theologians. A Czech protagonist of the reformatory movement, Matthew of Janov (d. 1393), repeatedly compared the meagreness of all later ‘mandata et adinventiones hominum’ (‘directives and inventions of people’) with the words of the Decalogue, comprehended by him ‘quasi decem gubernacula vitae hominis’ (‘as the ten main principles of human life’).⁴ Others cautioned against ignorance and perfidy. Martin von Amberg (b. c. 1340), preacher, inquisitor and author of the German “Commentary on the Ten Commandments”, emphasized that observing the commandments is necessary for redemption.⁵ Others still, in order to more easily reach the minds and hearts of a broader circle of believers, resorted to didactical measures and symbolism, which were peculiar in their simplicity. Marquard von Lindau (d. 1392) perceived God’s warning against disobeying the Ten Commandments in the number of ten fingers and ten toes on each man.⁶ Gottschalk Hollen stressed the

3 ‘It would certainly be practical, as it once was during the Black Death epidemic when the medical faculty formulated scripts to instruct people, if nowadays the theological faculty, or someone on its behalf, prepared similar scripts teaching the main rules of our faith to instruct common believers’, Gerson Johannes, *Œuvre épistolaire*, in *ibid.*, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 2, ed. P. Glorieux (Paris – New York: 1960) 28. See: Bast R.J., *Honor your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, c. 1400–1600*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought 71 (Leiden: 1997) 14.

4 Nechutová J., “Kategorie zákona božího a M. Matěj z Janova”, *Sborník Prací Filosofické Fakulty Brněnské University* 16, *Řada Archeologicko-klasická* E 12 (Brno: 1967) 213.

5 Amberg Martin von, *Der Gewissenspiegel*, ed. S.N. Werbow, *Texte des späten Mittelalters*, 2.7 (Berlin: 1958) 40. See also: Baumann K., *Aberglaube für Laien. Zur Programmatik und Überlieferung spätmittelalterlicher Superstitionenkritik*, *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur europäischen Ethnologie* 1 (Würzburg: 1989) 215–217.

6 Weidenhiller P.E., *Untersuchungen zur deutschsprachigen katechetischen Literatur des späten Mittelalters* (Munich: 1965) 20. See also: Baumann, *Aberglaube für Laien*, vol. 1, 220–221. A similar comparison can be found in a German adaptation of *Praeceptorium* by Nicholas of Lyra: ‘Diese gebot sint geschriben an dryen stetten des libes, in den henden, by den zehen fingern, an den fussen by den zehen und an unsern funfsinnen uszwendig und inwennig. Darumb die gebot sollen in uns schicken die werk unser hend, die weg unser begirde, und messen und bruchen unser synne und unser wandel’ (‘The Ten Commandments were inscribed into our body as ten fingers, ten toes, as well as five carnal and sensual sins.

informative and juridical character of the Decalogue in his commentary entitled *Praeceptorium*, as he lectured in the introduction: 'ignorantia facti non iuris excusat' ('ignorance does not alleviate sin'). For this reason, according to him the divine laws are 'addiscenda' ('to be learned'), 'opere adimplenda' ('to be applied') and 'nunquam obliviscenda' ('never forgotten').⁷ The universalism of the Decalogue, in which the entirety of possible human vices and susceptibility to sin are found, was also emphasized. Johannes Wolff of Frankfurt, one of the better known German commentators of the Decalogue in the second half of the fifteenth century, was given the nickname 'doctor decem praeceptorum' ('doctor of the Ten Commandments'). He explained that God's commandments contain all the categories of sin present in the church's teaching, which means that each of the sins, bar none, is at the same time a sin against the Ten Commandments.⁸ In the German commentary *Von den czechen poten*, Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl (d. 1433) placed all the commandments in a meaningful and voluminous triad: 'moralia', 'cerimonialia' and 'iudicialia'.⁹ All possible human moral dilemmas of worldly life were solved through obedience to God's commandments, which constituted the fundamental criterion to distinguish good from evil. In this way, the symbolism of the Decalogue was referred to as 'res significata' in the meaning of objects and events that contain the number ten, especially in relation to the Ten Commandments and the ten plagues of Egypt. Depictions of the ten plagues of Egypt as a punishment of God for breaching the Decalogue can be found throughout Christian history, starting from the literature of the early church and continuing into the late Middle Ages. These depictions are also visible in medieval iconography. In this context, the Decalogue is lectured as 'medicina decem plagarum' ('the medicine of the Ten Plagues').¹⁰ This interpretation of the Old Testament was continued by, among others, Thomas of Chobham (d. c. 1233–1236) in his *Summa confessorum*.¹¹

Hence, the Ten Commandments should be the work of our hands, the way to our desires, the measure of our sins and our parting with them, as well as the reason of our amendment', see Geffcken J. (ed.), *Der Bildercatechismus* 21.

7 [Hollen Gottschalk], *Praeceptorium domini Gotschalci Hollen de ordine heremitarum sancti Augustini* (Nürnberg, Anton Koburger: 1503) fol. 11ra.

8 Falk F., *Drei Beichtbüchlein nach den zehn Geboten aus der Frühzeit der Buchdruckerkunst*, Reformationsgeschichtliche Studien und Texte 2 (Münster–Westf.: 1907) 11–12.

9 Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl, *Von den czechen poten ain tractat*, ed. Baumann, *Aberglaube für Laien* 2, 503.

10 Honemann V., "Zehn Gebote und Ägyptische Plagen", in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon* 10 (Berlin – New York: 1999) 1503–1510.

11 Thomas of Chobham, *Summa confessorum*, ed. F. Broomfield, *Analecta Mediaevalia Namurcensia* 25 (Louvain – Paris: 1968) 27–37.

Many commentaries on the Decalogue were named 'mirrors', for instance *Speculum aureum decem praeceptorum Dei*, *Speculum Christiani*, *Eyn speyghel des cristen ghelouen*, *Speygel der Christen mynschen*, *Spiegel christlicher walfart*, *Der speygel der leyn*, *Spiegel des Sünders*, *Gewissenspiegel*, and *Der dreieckeicht Spiegel*. Johannes Geiler von Kaisersberg (d. 1510), a theologian and preacher of Freiburg and later of Basel, dedicated a separate essay on the mirror symbolism and its physical properties.¹² Referring to the Biblical explanation of *Exodus* 38:8 in which God ordered Moses to make a basin covered in mirrors in which those approaching the altar could wash away their sins, John Geiler discussed seven consecutive attributes of a mirror. The Holy Bible, especially the Decalogue contained therein, is such a mirror and reflects the real state of our soul: both good and bad deeds. However, Geiler stressed that in order to fulfil its inherent functions, the mirror has to be clean and unsoiled. Only such a mirror is reliable and only by seeing a faithful reflection can a man clearly notice 'die masen der sünden [...] und die gezierd der tugenden' ('the multitude of sins [...] and the beauty of virtues'), and, consequently, separate good from evil according to God's commandments.¹³

Unfortunately, neither the commentaries and discourses on the Decalogue nor the stormy development of pastoral literature, especially since the thirteenth century, are objects of particular attention in medieval studies, although the corpus of inventories and source repertories have been available to us for a long time.¹⁴ Similar research concerns apply to studies on the texts of Latin

12 Geiler von Kaysersberg Johannes, *Der dreieckeicht Spiegel*, see Geffcken (ed.), *Der Bildercatechismus* 30–35.

13 Ibid., 31.

14 Bast, *Honor your Fathers* 32–45; id., "From Two Kingdoms to Two Tables: The Ten Commandments and the Christian Magistrate", *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 89 (1998) 79–95; Smith L., *The Ten Commandments. Interpreting the Bible in the Medieval World*, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions 175 (Leiden: 2014). Elementary repertories of incipits of these works and relevant bibliographies: Bloomfield M.W. – Guyot B.-G. – Howard D.R. – Kabealo T.B., *Incipits of Latin Works in the Virtues and Vices 1100–1500 A.D.* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1979); Newhauser R. – Bejczy I.P., *A Supplement to Morton W. Bloomfield et al. Incipits of Latin Works on the Virtues and Vices 1100–1500 A.D.*, Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia 50 (Turnhout: 2008); Newhauser R., *A Catalogue of Latin Texts with Material on the Vices and Virtues in Manuscripts in Hungary*, GRATIA: Bamberger Schriften zur Renaissanceforschung 29 (Wiesbaden: 1996). The history of the genre: Newhauser R., *The Treatise on Vices and Virtues in Latin and the Vernacular*, Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental 68 (Turnhout: 1993) 21–54.

sermons from the fifteenth century that include a discourse on the Decalogue. The scarcity in sermonic research on this topic is evident.¹⁵

The preservation of similar *Sermones de decem praeceptis* in Polish collections is still uncertain. Wiesław Wydra collected over ninety texts concerning the Decalogue in Old Polish. The majority of these were derived from sermons or supplements to sermons, but the collection also included short notes and short commentaries on the Decalogue. As Wydra specified, the Polish Decalogue-texts originate from the Latin: 'Unum cole Deum, nec vane iura per ipsum' ('Thou shalt have no other gods before me'). Their memorization was facilitated by their rhymed form in Polish, and their comprehension by the use of the vernacular. Polish Decalogue-texts appeared in large numbers in the fifteenth century, the oldest from 1399, but they may have existed in the same form as early as the twelfth century.¹⁶ The tradition of teaching the Decalogue spans from the oldest testimony from *Predicationes*, from the Kraków Cathedral manuscript 140 (43) dated ca. 800 and originating in Salzburg. In

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- 15 Schneyer J.B., *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermons des Mittelalters für die Zeit von 1150–1350*, vol. 1–8, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters. Texte und Untersuchungen 43, fasc. 1–8 (Münster: 1969–1978); id., *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für die Zeit von 1350–1500*. Nach der Vorarbeit von J.B. Schneyer – L. Hödl – W. Knoch (Münster – Aschendorff: 2001). In the homiletic literature of the Middle Ages there were plenty of European *sermones* teaching the Decalogue, but the scope of their occurrence has not yet been established. Johannes B. Schneyer's repertory is not authoritative for the period of the late Middle Ages, as it does not contain this category of sermons on the Decalogue and omits source material from Central Europe. Furthermore, the group of sermons collated by W. Wydra from Polish sources, which include a lecture on the Decalogue, consists of slightly over ten manuscripts and is also incomplete. Future research is expected to reveal additional examples of *sermones de decem praeceptis*. Dahmus J., "Medieval German Preaching on the Ten Commandments: a comparison of Berthold of Regensburg and Johannes Nider", *Medieval Sermon Studies* 44 (2000) 37–52; Wydra W., *Polskie dekalogi średniowieczne* (Warsaw: 1973) 7; ibid., "Średniowieczne polskie dekalogi i modlitwy codzienne z rękopisów i inkunabułów jasnogórskich biblioteki oo. paulinów" *Slavia occidentalis* 59 (2002) 189–193 names the following sermons: MS. Wrocław Ossolineum 4500; Kraków Biblioteka Jagiellońska: 1297, 1299, 1625; Kraków Biblioteka XX. Czartoryskich 3729 Q; Warszawa BN: IV 3022, IV 3025; Częstochowa AJG II 39, and, not existing: Petersburg Imperial-Public Library Lat. O. 29, Lat. I. O. 32; Warszawa Biblioteka Kasińskich 33. See also: MS. Kielce Biblioteka Wyższego Seminarium Duchownego 31, fols. 88v–90vb.
- 16 Wydra, *Polskie dekalogi średniowieczne*; idem, "Średniowieczne polskie dekalogi" 183–198; Wielgus S., *Średniowieczna literatura biblijna w języku polskim* (Lublin: 1991) 24–30 and Latin commentaries on the Decalogue in Polish collections: id., *Obca literatura biblijna w średniowiecznej Polsce* (Lublin: 1990) 241–242.

several sermons from *Predicationes* (nos. 10, 11, 12, 25) traces of teachings based on the Decalogue and the Beatitudes can be found.¹⁷ There is also a paraphrase of the Decalogue in the seventh sermon from the so-called Gniezno Sermons dated at the beginning of the fifteenth century.¹⁸ It is worth mentioning that in the Czech community, a comprehensive poem “Desatero kázanie božie” (“The Sermon on the Ten Commandments”) was in circulation in the fourteenth century, and Jan Hus (d. 1415) himself was the author of a comprehensive *Expositio Decalogi*.¹⁹ Knowing the close Polish-Czech sermonic relations and personal contacts one can assume the Czech influence in the incorporation of teachings on the Decalogue in Poland.²⁰

Decem praecepta belonged to the rudimentary prayers and could be found in the oldest collations of Polish texts intended for instruction in the faith. Starting from the thirteenth century, the commands of the church synods often reminded parish clergy of the duty to teach (among others the Decalogue)

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- 17 Qui me diligit, mandata mea custodit, quasi dixisset. Qui non custodit mandata mea, me odit et me contendit' [Cf. *Jn.* 14:23] ('He who loves me is, as if he said that he abides by my commandments. Who does not keep my commandments, despises me and quarrels with me'), *Praedicatio X*, in *Praedicationes per diversa ieiunia et varia e codice Cracoviensi* 140 (43), ed. B. Kürbis – J. Wolny – D. Zydorek, compiled by B. Kürbis – M. Sobieraj, *Monumenta Sacra Polonorum* 4 (Kraków: 2010) 176; Kürbis B., “Kazanie na Górze in the catechesis of the oldest manuscript from Kraków Cathedral”, in *Benedyktynska praca. Studia historyczne ofiarowane o. Pawłowi Szczanieckiemu, w 80- rocznicę urodzin*, Spież J.A. – Wielgosz Z. (eds.) (Kraków: 1997) 31–44; Ryś G., “Wawelskie homiliarze x–xii w.”, in *Źródła kultury duchowej Krakowa, Materiały z sesji naukowej Kraków, 6 listopada 2007*, Rusnaczyk I. (ed.) (Kraków: 2008) 11–49.
 - 18 *Kazanie 7: na Boże Narodzenie*, in *Kazania gnieźnieńskie. Podobizna. Transliteracja*, ed. S. Vrtel-Wierczyński, *Zabytki języka i literatury polskiej* 2 (Poznań: 1953) 23; Wolny J., “Łaciński zbiór kazań Peregryna z Opola i ich związek z tzw. Kazaniami Gnieźnieńskimi”, in Lewański J. (ed.), *Średniowiecze. Studia o kulturze* 1 (Warsaw: 1961) 211–212. According to Jerzy Wolny's interpretation it is a literal translation of the sermon “For Christmas Day” by Jerome of Prague (d. 1416), a royal preacher from Krakow of Czech origin, from his collection “Exemplar salutis aeternae” (*Sermones de sanctis*).
 - 19 See also Jan Hus, “Expositio Decalogi”, in *Mag. Joannis Hus Opera omnia*, vol. 1, Fasc. 1, ed. W. Flajšhans (Prague: 1903); idem, “Výklad na desatero přikazanie”, in *Magistri Iohannis Hus Opera omnia*, vol. 1: *Expositiones bohemicae – Výklady*, ed. J. Daňhelka (Prague: 1975) 327. Cf. Šmahel F. “Slovo pisane i mównone w służbie reformy husyckiej”, in Adamska A. – Kras, P. (eds.), *Kultura pisma w średniowieczu. Znane problemy. Nowe metody* (Lublin: 2013) 184.
 - 20 See Vydra B., *Polská středověká literatura kazatelská a její vztahy ke kazatelské literatuře české* (Prague: 1928) (*Věstník Královské České Společnosti Nauk. Třída Filosoficko – Historicko – Jazykopytá. Ročník* 1927).

during the Sunday mass. However, in Poland traces of teaching can be found as early as 1124 in the description of the missionary expedition to Pomerania ("The Life of St. Otto of Bamberg").²¹ In accordance with synodal resolutions, the commandments were recited chorally during church services, sometimes in place of a sermon, and thus were a form of simple catechetical teaching. Alternatively, the Decalogue was sometimes repeated during *exhortatio*, the supplement to the sermon, presented along with Bidding-Prayers for the departed (*obsecrationes, preces, supplicationes publicae, orationes fidelium*),²² already known in *Liber precum Gertrudae Ducissae* from the second half of the eleventh century.²³

The sermon *De decem praeceptis* originates from one of the most popular *Postilla* in the Polish sermon collections from the fifteenth century: "Sermones dominicales et festivos". Ascribed to Peter of Miłosław, it is archived in manuscript 3022 from the National Library in Warsaw. A different copy of this sermon, rewritten according to the colophon in 1480, originates from an anonymous collection of sermons maintained in manuscript 11 39 at the Pauline Archive on Jasna Góra in Częstochowa and stemming from the second half of the fifteenth century. Both manuscripts were used as a basis for this article.²⁴

21 *Herbordi vita Ottonis episcopi Babenbergensis*, ed. A. Bielowski, Monumenta Poloniae Historica 2 (Warsaw: 1961) 79; Wydra, *Polskie Dekalogi* 3; Cohrs F., "Zur Katechese am Ende des Mittelalters", *Zeitschrift für praktische Theologie* 20 (1898) 293–294.

22 Sczaniecki P., *Służba Boża w dawnej Polsce. Seria II* (Poznań – Lublin: 1966) 116–120; Kowalczyk M., "Wypominki Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego z lat 1431/32, 1453 i 1458", *Studia Warmińskie* 9 (1972) 523–534.

23 *Modlitwy księżnej Gertrudy z Psalterza Egberta z Kalendarzem. Liber precum Gertrudae Ducissae*, ed. M.H. Malewicz, B. Kürbis, Monumenta Sacra Polonorum 2 (Krakow: 2002) 166–169; *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, vol. 1 (Poznań: 1877) 511. Bidding-Prayers (*obsecrationes*) are according to Paweł Sczaniecki, a researcher who made an inventory of Polish collections and discussed twenty texts from 1415–1500, the first forms of church prayers in vernacular. See: Sczaniecki, *Służba Boża w dawnej Polsce. Seria II* 121. For more about the prayers in vernacular see: Briscoe M.G., *Artes Praedicandi*, Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental 61 (Turnhout: 1992) 18, no. 10 (Constitutiones from 1281 by Archbp. Peckham); Russell G.H., "Vernacular Instruction for the Laity in the later Middle Ages", *Journal of Religious History* 2 (1962) 98–119; Martin H., *Le métier de prédicateur à la fin du Moyen Âge. 1350–1520* (Paris 1988) 295–315; Schmitt J.-C., "Du bon usage de Credo", in *Faire Croire. Modalités de la diffusion et de la réception des messages religieux du XII^e au XV^e siècle*, Collection de l'École française de Rome 51 (Rome: 1981) 349.

24 *Sermo de praeceptis*, MS. Warszawa Biblioteka Narodowa 3022 (=BN) fols. 91rb–95va and MS. Częstochowa Archiwum oo. paulinów na Jasnej Górze 11 39 (=AJG) fols. 60r–66v. Incipit: 'Audi Israel precepta mea et ea in corde tuo quasi in libro scribe Exodi XX^o [Ex. 20.3–17] Carissimi testor vobis dictum sapientis Ecc. x [Ecc. 12.13], qui dicit: <Time Deum et

The sermon *De decem praeceptis* has for a long time attracted the attention of researchers, mainly due to the Old Polish-sounding rhymed commandments interspersed into the predicatorial commentary. Therefore, it primarily drew attention for philological reasons, as one of the most interesting relics of medieval Polish. Although the Old-Polish Decalogue-texts interspersed in the sermon have already been published three times, the sermon itself and its didactic message have not been the subject of a separate analysis.²⁵ The sermon has never been published in a critical edition either.

The sermon of interest, *Sermo: De decem praeceptis*, belongs to a less frequently used method of preaching the Decalogue. The basis of such sermons—*verbum themathis*—is one of the commandments, or as in our case, an excerpt from a chant—*responsorium*—with a reference to *Exodus* 20:3–17: ‘Audi Israel precepta mea et ea in corde tuo quasi in libro scribe Exodi XX’ [(‘Listen Israel to my commandments and inscribe them into your heart as in a book’); Responsory; *Ex.* 20:3–17]. This is supplemented by a complementary verse from the *Book of Qoheleth* [*Ecclesiastes*] 12:13: ‘Carissimi testor vobis dictum sapientis *Ecc. X* [*Ecc.* 12:13], qui dicit: “*Time Deum et mandata eius serva. Hoc est omnis homo*”’ (‘Dearest, I remind you of the words of the sage [...] Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man’). In the liturgical order the responsory ‘Audi Israel praecepta domini et ea in corde tuo quasi in libro scribe et dabo tibi terram fluentem lac et mel’ (‘Listen Israel to the commandments of God, and inscribe them into your heart as in a book, and I will give to you a land abundant in milk and honey’) is present in European antiphonaries as early as the ninth century.²⁶ The oldest preserved chant of this type is the so-called “Antiphonary of Mściśław, the abbot of Tyniec” from

mandata eius serva. Hoc est omnis homo>, videlicet hoc pertinet ad omnem hominem ...> <... Explicit: <Venite benedicti patris mei percipite regnum celorum [*Mt.* 25:34]>. Ad quod nos perducatur pater et filius. Amen’. See: *Inwentarz rękopisów do połowy XVI wieku w zbiorach Biblioteki Narodowej*, eds. J. Kaliszuk – S. Szyller (Warsaw: 2012) 82; Kaczmarczyk K., *Inwentarz biblioteki klasztoru oo. Paulinów w Częstochowie 1818*, ms. Kraków Muzeum Narodowe – Zbiory Czapskich, 459; Wydra, “Średniowieczne polskie dekalogi i modlitwy codzienne” 189–193; Bracha K., *Nauczanie kaznodziejskie w Polsce późnego średniowiecza. Sermones dominicales et festuales z tzw. kolekcji Piotra z Miłostawia* (Kielce 2007) 48–49.

25 Brückner A., *Kazania średniowieczne*, part 3 (Kraków: 1897) 85–86; Belcarzowa E., *Głosy polskie w kazaniach średniowiecznych, część IV* (Warsaw: 2001) 116–117; Wydra, *Polskie dekalogi średniowieczne* 72–74, 127–129; idem, “Średniowieczne polskie dekalogi i modlitwy codzienne” 189–193; Wydra W. – Rzepka W., *Chrestomatia staropolska. Teksty do roku 1543* (Wrocław – Łódź: 1984) 25.

26 *Antiphonarium from Albi*, ms. Rochegude, Bibliothèque municipale 44, fol. 82v. See: CANTUS. A Database for Latin Ecclesiastical Chant, <http://cantusdatabase.org/id/006143?page=1-3>.

1409, which was sung on the Fourth Sunday of Lent (*Quadragesimae*).²⁷ The pericope “Audi Israel precepta Dei” from the *Book of Deuteronomy* 4:1 or “Audi Israel precepta domini” from Exodus frequently appear as a basis in sermons that include a commentary on the Decalogue as well as in commentaries on the Decalogue. We know these verses from other sermons by men such as Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Langenstein—also known as Henry of Hesse the Elder—and Marquard von Lindau as well as from comprehensive commentaries. The first example of this is *Tractatus de decem praeceptis* by Heinrich von Friemar (der Ältere; d. 1340), which is well known and maintained in numerous manuscripts.²⁸ The message of teaching the Decalogue had to respect the interpretation of the authorities: Peter Lombard, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, *Glossa ordinaria* and Thomas Aquinas, and this is visible in the commentaries to varying extents.²⁹ In each of these cases, the homiletic commentary on the Decalogue fits in the penitential climate, characteristic of the Easter period’s annual focus on communion and atonement.

Let us return to the sermon of interest and the didactic message contained therein. The leading theme (*Ex.* 20:3–17), as well as the supplementary theme (*Qoh.* 12:13) introduce the core focus of the teaching, which is the duty of obeying the commandments and the fundamental place of the Decalogue in a Christian’s life: ‘Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man’ (*Qoh.* 12:13). The preacher urges parishioners to consider that the aim of human life is redemption, which depends on fear of God and obeying the commandments (‘consistit in timore Dei et in observacione preceptum ipsius’; ‘exists in the fear of God and in abiding by his commandments’). He confirms these truths with the authority of the Holy Bible by quoting another four verses from the Old Testament, specifically *Sirach* 1:16 and 1:27, and concludes with *Matthew* 19:17: ‘But if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments’.³⁰

27 Bratkowski T., *Officium divinum de tempore w rękopiśmiennych antyfonarzach zakonów benedyktyńskich w Polsce od XI do XIX wieku* (Rzeszów: 2013) 247.

28 Baumann, *Aberglaube für Laien*, vol. 2, 130; Zumkeller A., *Manuskripte von Werken der Autoren des Augustiner-Eremitenordens*, Cassiciacum 20 (Würzburg: 1966) 144–152, no. 325, 584–586; Warnock R.G., “Heinrich von Friemar der Ältere”, in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, vol. 3 (Berlin – New York: 1981) 730–737.

29 See: Torrell J.-P., “Les Collationes in Decem Praeceptis de Saint Thomas d’Aquin, édition critique avec introduction et notes”, *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 69 (1985) 5–40, 227–263; Bonaventure, *Collations on the Ten Commandments, introduction and translation by P.J. Spaeth*, in *Works of St. Bonaventure*, vol. VI (New York: 1995).

30 ‘Et hoc notare debemus, quod salus cuiuslibet hominis consistit in timore Dei et in observacione preceptorum ipsius, quod hec est beatitudo. Teste Psalmo: “Beatus vir, qui timet dominum in mandatis eius volet nimis” [Psalm 11.1]. Et Salomon Ecc. Primo [Sirach 1.16;

The sermon's *indicium* repeats the recognized theme of the Decalogue known from previous statements; the Decalogue defines the principal rules of human existence, as is the case in the above-mentioned Matthew of Janow's 'gubernacula vitae hominis'. In order to obey them, the preacher argues, one must first learn them.³¹ This remark by the preacher explicitly states that the aim of the sermon was not only a moralistic commentary, but also, and maybe above all, a literal teaching of the Decalogue's content.³² For these catechistic reasons, *id est* teaching one of the rudimentary prayers, the author of the sermon quotes the commandments in Latin, followed by the Old-Polish translation in the rhymed version of mnemonic value. The Decalogue is the basis for and the subject of the homily.

The proper part of the sermon, still in the *exordium* part, was preceded by quoting a rhymed Decalogue in Old Polish. This formed the basis for the preacher's commentary, divided into ten paragraphs, consequently introduced with titles according to the pattern: 'Et hoc est preceptum principalium [...]; 'Secundum preceptum est [...]; 'Tercium preceptum est [...]; 'Quartum preceptum est [...]' ('And this is the first commandment [...]; 'The second commandment is [...]; 'The third commandment is [...]; 'The fourth commandment is'), etcetera. The whole sermon is built on an easily predictable construction compatible with the order of the subsequent commandments. The commentaries on the first seven and last commandments each take up two columns of the manuscript. However, the commentaries on the eighth and ninth commandments are clearly shorter, limited to only half a column. Whatever these proportions may mean, they deserve our attention.

1.27]: "Inicium sapientie est timor domini, quia timor domini expellit peccatum" et docet facere iusticiam et exquirat ea, que beneplacita sunt Deo' ('And we should remember that salvation of any one of us is in the fear of God, and in adhering to his commandments, because this is benediction. This is attested by the Psalm: "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord: he shall delight exceedingly in his commandments" [Psalm 111:1]. And Salomon in *Ecclesiasticus*, Chapter one [*Sirach* 1:16, 1:27]: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, because the fear of the Lord driveth out sin" teaches the law, and decides upon what is in his liking'), *Sermo de praeceptis*, MS. BN 3022, fol. 91rb–91va; MS AJG II 39, fol. 60r.

31 'Si autem velis ea servare, extunc necesse est et certe (?) primo scire ea, que sunt et que Deus vult habere per te' ('If you wish to live by them, then it is necessary and sure that first you must learn them, and know what God awaits from you through them'), *Sermo de praeceptis*, MS. BN 3022, fol. 91va.

32 Bracha K., "Homo orans w nauczaniu kaznodziejskim w Polsce późnego średniowiecza", in Nodl M. – Bracha K. – Kras P. (eds.), *Zbožnost středověka*, *Colloquia mediaevalia* Pragensia 6 (Prague: 2007) 23–34.

In order to highlight the prevailing themes of catechesis and the inspiration for norms defined by the Decalogue, we must look closer at the individual commentaries. It is not surprising that in the didactic narration of the sermon a discourse *per negativum* is prevailing, including admonishment against and criticism of heretical religious practices subject to the Decalogue's sanctions. In this way, the preacher is able to address all possible categories of sins, misdemeanours, and mistakes conflicting with God's commandments. On the principle of inversion, he presents an anti-model of a Christian, an anti-Decalogue, and an anti-world, which he condemned on the basis of the Decalogue's sanctions. In the homiletic discourse the vices and weaknesses prevail, and the virtues are eluded. This exemplifies reception of the so-called tradition of the two ways, contrasting vices against virtues or presenting the virtues by reversing them and condemning the vices.³³ The repetitive phrases 'Contra hoc faciunt omnis [...]', 'Contra hoc preceptum [...]', 'Contra hoc preceptum faciunt [...]' or 'Contra hoc peccant' ('Against this all rise [...]', 'Against this commandment [...]', 'Against that commandment transgress [...]', 'Against this commandment sin') appear in almost every commentary, and are followed by long presentations of sins and suspect practices.

The preacher divided the commandments into two parts, according to the order we know from Augustine: the first three 'ad divinitatem' ('concern God'), and the following seven 'ad proximum' ('concern one's kin'). As we know, Augustine emphasized the double command of love found in the Decalogue: 'dilectione scilicet Dei et proximi' ('concern love, i.e. towards God and one's kin'), where three of the commands refer to God, and seven to the fellow men (*Ex.* 20:1–17; *Deut.* 5:6–21). This further influenced the depiction of sins: nine sins belonging to others, four sins that demand vengeance from God, and six sins against the Holy Ghost.³⁴

To date, most research has focussed on commentaries on the first commandment because they contain criticism of the relics of idolatry and

33 Cf. Schneyer J.B., *Die Unterweisung der Gemeinde über die Predigt bei scholastischen Predigern*, Veröffentlichungen des Grabmann-Instituts zur Erforschung der mittelalterlichen Theologie und Philosophie, Neue Folge 4 (Munich – Vienna: 1968) 91; Martin H., *Le métier de prédicateur à la fin du Moyen Âge. 1350–1520* (Paris: 1988) 282; Vauchez A., *Les laïcs au Moyen Âge. Pratiques et expériences religieuses* (Paris: 1987) 127; Bracha K., *Nauczanie kaznodziejskie w Polsce późnego średniowiecza. Sermones dominicales et festi- vales z tzw. kolekcji Piotra z Miłostawia* (Kielce: 2007) 321–324.

34 Cf. Suntrup R. – Wachinger B. – Zotz N., "Zehn Gebote (deutsche Erklärungen)", in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, vol. 10 (Berlin – New York: 1999) 1485.

superstitiones.³⁵ This is no different in the analysed sermon *De decem praeceptis*, and the explanation of sins against the first commandment is especially interesting. Disobedience to the first commandment is embedded in general disapproval and condemnation of any false Christians, pagans ('pagani et gentiles') and false believers, that is, heretics. The preacher does not reveal any specific groups of heretics, but an explanation implying the Holy Trinity mystery is visible and mention of the Eucharist suggests contemporary heretics, most probably Hussites or their successors.³⁶ Polish preaching of the late Middle Ages is full of such allusions, or in some cases straightforward invectives, against 'moderni heretici'.³⁷ Sorcerers and fortune-tellers, 'incantatores et sortilegi', were also classified among the condemned, whom the preacher not only identified as 'wulgariter Czarownicze, kuglarze' ('witches, conjurers'), but also included actors, goliards etcetera.³⁸ Their fault is described by the

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- 35 Harmening, *Spätmittelalterliche Aberglaubensliteratur* 246; Baumann, *Aberglaube für Laien* vol. 1–2; Pietsch P., "Kleine Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Aberglaubens des Mittelalters", *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 16 (1884) 185–196; Bracha K., "Pierwsze Przykazanie w katechezie późnośredniowiecznej w świetle Komentarzy do Dekalogu", in Iwańczak, W. – Bracha K. (eds.), *Nauczanie w dawnych wiekach. Edukacja w średniowieczu i u progu ery nowożytnej. Polska na tle Europy*, (Kielce: 1997) 119–134; Lasson É., *Superstitions médiévales: une analyse d'après l'exégèse du premier commandement d'Ulrich de Pottenstein* (Paris: 2010); Ulrich von Pottenstein, *Dekalog–Auslegung. Das erste Gebot: Text und Quellen*, ed. G. Baptist-Hlawatsch, *Texte und Textgeschichte* 43 (Tübingen: 1995).
- 36 'Et contra hanc primam expositionem omnis pagani et gentiles et falsi christiani, quales sunt heretici, qui alius sentiunt in fide circa misterium sancte Trinitatis vel circa sacramentum corporis et sanguinis Ihesu Christi' ('As to the first explanation, such is the conduct of all pagans and false Christians, or those who are heretics, because they comprehend the truths of faith concerning the mystery of the Holy Trinity, Eucharist, the blood of Jesus Christ'), *Sermo de praeceptis*, MS. BN 3022, fol. 91vb; MS AJG II 39, fol. 61r.
- 37 Belcarzowa E., *Głosy polskie w łacińskich kazaniach średniowiecznych*, cz. 1 (Wrocław: 1981) 56, 87–88, 95, 103. See: Kras P., "<<Pro fidei defensione contra modernos hereticos>> Heretiques et inquisiteurs dans la Pologne medievale (XIV^e–XV^e siecle)", *Heresis* 40 (2004) 85–94; Bylina St., "Wizerunek heretyka w Polsce późnośredniowiecznej", *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 30 (1985) 19 ff.
- 38 Lexers M., *Mittelhochdeutsches Taschenwörterbuch* (Stuttgart: 1986) 75. See: Browe P., "Die kirchliche Stellung der Schauspieler im Mittelalter", *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 18 (1928) 246–257; Wolny J., "Materiały do historii wagantów w Polsce średniowiecznej", *Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej* 19 (1969) 78–87; Wiesiołowski J., "Pozycja społeczna artysty w polskim mieście średniowiecznym", in Skubiszewski P. (ed.), *Sztuka i ideologia XV wieku* (Warsaw: 1978) 75; Goff J. le, "Métiers licites et métiers illicites dans l'Occident médiéval", in *Pour un autre Moyen Age* (Paris: 1977) 100–101; Bracha, *Nauczanie kaznodziejskie*, 278–286.

sanction from Canon Law appointed in this place.³⁹ Another condemned group consists of fortune-tellers who advise in choosing a wife, for 'divinaciones' in general are, according to the preacher, 'artes dyabolice et sortilegia sunt hominum ficciones' ('devil's art and witchcraft are confabulations of people'), or as mentioned in a different passage 'those who make magic in a marriage'.⁴⁰ The explanation with the Polish gloss 'circa coniugia incantaciones vulgariter nyeswoy faciant' ('in matrimony they practice witchcraft and through this they cause discord') suggests that it refers to the category of harmful magic, *id est* causing feuds and discord in marriage, or in family in general.⁴¹ The magic folklore that runs through the remaining part of the commentary in which the preacher names prophetic practices (such as using divination to know when it was best to move to a different house, throw coals, wax or lead into water to learn the future or do magic with the use of a consecrated Host) is a cyclic topos in the criticism of superstitions.⁴² The criticism in the commentary on the

39 'Contra hoc preceptum etiam faciunt incantatores et sortilegi vulgariter *Czarownicze, kuglarze* [MS AJG II 39, fol. 61r: *czarownyczy, gulsznyczy, cuglarze et divinatores*], qui etiam a iure sunt excommunicati, ut in <Decreto> dicitur: "Qui faciunt sortilegia et incantaciones peccatum gravissimum incurrunt nec debent absolvi per simplicem sacerdotem" ('Against this commandment transgress also those who indulge in witchcraft and augury, in the vernacular called witches, jugglers, diviners and who are excommunicated according to the law, as it is stated in the Decree: "Who indulge in augury and witchcraft, commit the gravest sin and should not be absolved by an ordinary priest"'), *Sermo de praeceptis*, MS. BN 3022, fols. 91vb–92ra. *Decretum Gratiani*, pars II, causa 26, qu. 5, c. 3–14, ed. E. Friedberg, *Corpus iuris canonici*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: 1879 [reprint Graz: 1959]) col. 1028–1036.

40 *Sermo de praeceptis*, MS. BN 3022, fol. 92ra.

41 Ibid., fol. 92ra. See: Flint V.I.J., *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton, New Jersey: 1991) 231–239.

42 'Audiant quam graviter peccant, aut qui sortilegia faciunt, quando de domo una in alteram egrediunt vel carbones prociunt, an ceram vel plumbum in aquam fundunt' ('May the people who sin gravely listen, because they practice witchcraft, when they go from one house to another, or when they scatter burning coals, or pour wax, or lead on water'), *Sermo de praeceptis*, MS. BN 3022, fol. 92ra; MS AJG II 39, fol. 61r. See: Bronzini G.B., "Le prediche di Bernardino e le tradizioni popolari del suo tempo", in *Bernardino predicatore nella società del suo tempo*, Convegni del Centro di Studi Sulla Spiritualità Medievale 16 (Todi: 1976) 111–152; Allevi F., "Costume folklore magia dell'appennino umbro – marchigiano nella predicazione di s. Giacomo della Marca", *Picenum Seraphicum* 13 (1976) 233–307; Pesce P.G., "La religiosità popolare nella predicazione bernardiniana", *Antoniano* 55 (1980) 612–633; Montesano M., "L'Osservanza francescana e la lotta contro le credenze <<magico – superstiziose>>. Vecchie e nuove prospettive di ricerca", *Quaderni Medievali* 41 (1996) 138–151; eadem, <<Supra acqua et supra ad vento>>. "Superstizioni", *maleficia e incantamenta nei predicatori francescani osservanti (Italia, saec. XV)*, Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo. Nuovi studi storici, 46 (Rome: 1999); Bylina St., "La Prédication,

first commandment goes beyond this level by encompassing other categories of sinners, comparing them to the greedy, thieves, usurers, slanderers and perjurers, debauchees, gluttons and drunkards. All of these sinners love worldly objects more than the divine.⁴³ They love their lovers, adulterers, concubines and material wealth more than they love God, and they would rather pay homage to their full stomachs than to God himself.

One peculiar accusation stands out, namely, condemning mistakes in prayers and relations within different degrees of worship. Referring to Augustine's 'nullum aliquem adores sicut dominum' ('worship no one but our Lord'), which is translated as 'wulgariter modo adores *nyemodlsza nikomu yako bogu*', the preacher also mentions unlawful Marian prayers requesting forgiveness of sins. Absolution, in accordance with the highest level of worship, *cultus latriae*, is something only God can give. Mary, on the other hand, deserves the worship of *hyperdulia* ('veneration'; 'ypodulie', in Polish 'oszoblyvye'), and the Saints deserve *dulia* ('veneration'; 'dulie', 'pospolycze').⁴⁴

les croyances et les pratiques traditionnelles en Pologne au bas Moyen Âge", in *L'Église et le peuple chrétien dans les pays de l'Europe du Centre-Est et du Nord (XIV^e–XV^e siècles)* (Rome: 1990) 301–313; Bracha K., "Magie und Aberglaubenskritik in den Predigten des Spätmittelalters in Polen", in Wunsch T. (ed.), *Religion und Magie in Ostmitteleuropa. Spielräume theologischer Normierungsprozesse in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, Religions- und Kulturgeschichte in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa 8 (Berlin: 2006) 197–215; Conti F., "Preachers and Confessors against 'Superstitions'. Bernardino Busti and Sermon 16 of His Rosarium Sermonum", *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft* 6, 1 (2011) 62–91.

43 'Contra hanc expositionem faciunt avari, qui divicias magis diligunt quam Deum [...] contra Deum acquirunt furtis, usuris et periuris calumpniis et foris iniustis mendaciis et his similibus. Similiter luxuriosi, qui plus diligunt suas amasias et adulteras quam Deum, eciam gulosi et bibuli, qui ventrem suum colunt pro Deo' ('Against this commandment transgress greedy people who love riches more than God [...] against this commandment transgress thieves, usurers, slanderers, and perjurers. Similarly, those who love their lovers and adulterers more than God, as well as drunkards and gluttons who venerate a full stomach more than God himself'), *Sermo de praeceptis*, MS. BN 3022, fol. 92ra; MS AJG II 39, fol. 61r–v.

44 'Ut si forte sic orares <Oro te Virgo sacratissima, indulge mihi peccata et mea>. Non enim potest hoc facere, ut posset peccata dimittere, nisi solus Deus, qui pro peccatis mortuis est et ipse solus peccata dimittit, quod nullam sanctorum potest facere. Et per hiis orationibus solus Deus est adorandus. Similiter et absolute adorare latrie, que nulli sanctorem debetur, nisi soli Deo. Virginem autem gloriosam debemus adorare yperdulie (oszoblyvye), [...] et gracia Dei suis meritis obtinere sanctos vero adorare possumus dulie (pospolycze)' ('And if you pray in the following manner: "Please, Most Holy Mother forgive me my trespasses". But, you should not absolve of the sins, for only God can absolve of mortal sins and no one else; no saint can do so. In these prayers you worship God only. Similarly,

Apart from the warning against confusing the levels of worship, which requires theological preparation, accusations of idolatry and worship of heavenly bodies such as the sun and the moon can be found in the text. These appear in the conclusion of the commentary and seem rather baffling, even though condemning idolatrous adoration of the heavenly bodies is a motif in the first commandment.⁴⁵ This teaching suggests that some topics were meant for a more demanding audience—zealots, whose fervency caused them to confuse the levels of worship, but did not have any bad intentions.

The next two commentaries are not as effusive or erudite. Violators of the second commandment primarily include perjurers, liars, those who take false oaths and votes, as well as blasphemers who take God's name in vain. The preacher compares all of them to traders who falsely swear to the quality of their merchandise or to their innocence, with God's name on their lips. There are also gamblers, players ('lusores') who explain falsely that they do not do it for profit.⁴⁶ Regarding the third commandment, after the greedy—who trade for gain or run trials on holy days—the primary group of offenders are dancers. Their sin is not so much in dancing, but rather in that to which their dancing leads: anger, quarrels and debauchery.⁴⁷ In the fire of criticism that dance was subjected to in the statements of medieval moralisers, our preacher clarified

you venerate God alone, because such worship is due to God only, not the saints. The Virgin Mary is to be worshipped in a hyperdulistic manner, [...] the saints – through their merits and the grace of God – we can worship in a dulistic way'), *Sermo de praeceptis*, MS. BN 3022, fol. 92rb. See: "Maria/Marienfrömmigkeit", in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 22 (Berlin – New York: 1991) 115 ff.; Falk, *Drei Beichtbüchlein* 24.

- 45 'Contra hoc faciunt aliqui adorantes lunam vel solem, quod Deus prohibuit fieri dicens: <Non habebis deos alienos>' ('Such are the actions of those who worship the moon and the sun. And God forbade it, saying: "You shall have no other Gods"'), *Sermo de praeceptis*, MS. BN 3022, fol. 92rb. Harmening, *Superstitio* 120–121, 250–258; Falk, *Drei Beichtbüchlein* 24.
- 46 'Tercio exponitur <Non assumas nomen domini tui in vanum> [...] prout faciunt lusores, testatores, qui culpam dyabolicam retorquerunt [...] O infelix lusor, qui in tua infidelitate audes Deum inculpare *wynycz*, cum ipse non sit culpabilis' ('Thirdly, it is said "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" [...] as is done by gamblers, players who at the devil's instigation demoralize themselves [...] Oh, how miserable is a player, when due to his lack of faith in God, he excuses himself that he is not to blame'), *Sermo de praeceptis*, MS. BN 3022, fol. 92vb.
- 47 'Contra hoc faciunt omnes eciam, qui peccata committunt [...] maxime autem peccatores et corisantes peccatores, quidam quia quod per totam ebdomadam laborant, hoc adveniente die festivo peribunt et inebriantur' ('Against this transgress also all those who commit sins [...] in particular sinners and dancers who work the whole week long, and on feast days they lapse and get drunk'), *ibid.*, fol. 93ra.

that dancing on days other than holy days is not a deadly sin.⁴⁸ It is unclear whether he had in mind only those less suspicious and tolerable dances organized in manors or all dances, bar none. His opinion is surprisingly tolerant.

The next seven commandments, which refer to one's fellow men, bring a long list of sins, cases, circumstances and suspect behaviour involving a variety of social and family situations. The preacher claims that the fourth commandment refers to the authority of two groups: parents and clergy, while highlighting that respect to the Heavenly Father must be the priority, for 'Amandus est genitor, scilicet preponandus est creator'.⁴⁹ The violators are, in the first case, failed daughters and sons who do not respect their parents, but instead curse them and raise their hands against them. In the second case, there are those who do not respect the clergy, do not obey the preachers' teachings, do not attend mass, do not fast and do not complete the ordered atonement.⁵⁰

Commentary on the fifth commandment is not confined to murderers and is not reduced to mortal bodily harm, but includes hatred and verbal slander. Magic constitutes a special category of 'homicidium', especially magic leading to abortion or suicide by means of poisonous potions.⁵¹ Among the sins

48 'Melius est, id est, minus malus est, diebus festis arare vel seminare quam coreas ducere, quia quot saltus in ea faciunt tot passus ad infernum. Et quamvis corea alio tempore non fit peccatum mortale, tamen die festivo contrahit difformitatem peccati mortalis' ('It is better, i.e. less wrong, to plough on feast days or sow than go and dance, because dancers will suffer as many pains in hell as they do jumps during dancing. And although dancing on other days than feasts is not a mortal sin, on feast days in this way one brings upon oneself various mortal sins'), *ibid.*, fol. 93ra. See: Legimi, C. "La danza nel pensiero medievale tra esegesi e predicazione", *Ludica* 5–6 (2000) 26–52.

49 *Sermo de praeceptis*, MS. BN 3022, fol. 93rb.

50 'Contra hoc preceptum faciunt infelices filii vel filie, qui parentes suos turpiter inhonorant, verberant, maledicunt. [...] Qui parentes suos maledicunt, tripliciter puniuntur a Deo vulgariter *zarazeny*. [...] Tercio honorare debemus patrem spiritualem, scilicet sacerdotem et confessorem, qui te per baptismum regnavit et rigore et vigore clavium peccata dimisit et per suam doctrinam ad Deum te dirigit et ipsum debes honorare et diligere et sermonibus eius obediendo, puta cum tibi precipit celebrandus celebra, ieiunandus ieiunias' ('Against this commandment transgress bad sons and daughters who in an abominable manner disrespect their parents, raise their hands against them, and curse them [...] Those who invoke evil against their parents are punished by God thrice. [...] And thirdly, we should respect the clergyman, i.e. the priest and confessor who by baptism adorned and through the power of the keys absolved your sins, and by his preaching led you to God, and you should respect and love him, and listen to his words, e.g. when he orders you to celebrate feast days and give alms'), *ibid.*, fol. 93rb.

51 'Hoc etiam homicidium prohibetur, quod fit per maleficia vulgariter *przesz truczyiny*, quod contigit, quando aborsum mulieribus ne pereant procurant vel quando alteri alicui venenum propinant, aut si aliquis forte se manu propria occidit [...] Tercio prohibetur

against the sixth commandment, the preacher mentions 'fornicatio', 'luxuria', impure and indecent thoughts, and 'adulterium'. He directs the focus of criticism on unmarried women—even if they live in chastity 'mente luxuriantur' ('giving themselves to lurid thoughts')—and on married women. 'Adulterium' takes place not only in contacts with strangers, but also within marriage. The preacher named three cyclical categories of marital lewd acts: those under the influence of impulsive desire, those forbidden by the Church, and animal-like intercourse or sodomite intercourse, for 'luxuria est ymmo adulterio comparatur' ('lecherousness is similar to adultery').⁵²

The preacher grouped the sins resulting from greed ('avaricia') and dependent on agricultural activities together with his explanation of the seventh, eighth, and ninth commandments. It is peculiar that on his list of sins, evading tithes and other donations to the Church is listed first, and that theft is mentioned in detail only secondly—specifically theft at the hands of rapists, robbers, plunderers, outlaws, dishonest tax collectors, dice players, dishonest judges, traders fiddling weights and measures, superiors not paying due reward to servants, and of course usurers.⁵³ The list closes with examples of those who do not return lost or stolen items to their rightful owners, creating a

homicidium, ut in honore ut nullam occidat aliquem lingwa (93vb) honori eius detrahendo' ('Manslaughter committed by witchcraft and poison, in the vernacular dubbed *przez trucznyni*, is also forbidden. It happens when with women abortion is undertaken, or when poison is given to others in drink, or when someone commits suicide [...]. Thirdly, manslaughter is forbidden, when it concerns also one's honour; no one should be killed by word depriving him of his honour'), *ibid.*, fol. 93va–b.

52 *Ibid.*, fol. 94ra–b. See: Finch J.A., "Sexual Morality and Canon Law: The Evidence of the Rochester Consistory Court", *Journal of Medieval History* 20 (1994) 261–275; Tentler Th. N., *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton, New Jersey: 1977) 189–190.

53 'Contra hoc faciunt omnes, qui decimas non dant vel male solviunt, furtum ymmo sacrilegium comittunt [...] omnes servi et ancille, omnes laborantes pro precio dominis suis [...] Secunda expositio huius precepti prohibet furtum violencie *gwaltownye*, contra quod faciunt omnes raptore inuisti, qui aliena bona rapiunt, quales sunt predones, spoliatores bursicide et exactores iniusti *pobyercze*, lusores taxillorum, iudices iniuste iudicantes, omnes malas mensuras et pondera (*vagi*) falsa habentes, omnes mercedem servorum detinentes' ('Against this commandment transgress those who fail to surrender due tithes or fail to fulfil their debts; in this way they commit theft or even sacrilege [...] all servants, male and female, as well as workers [...] The other explanation of this commandment concerns the prohibition of theft by violence, against which commandment transgress robbers who rob possessions of other people; like them are muggers, brigands, dice players, dishonest judges, merchants who falsify measures and weights, and all superiors who fail to pay due rewards to their servants'), *Sermo de praeceptis*, MS. BN 3022, fol. 94rb.

comprehensive case from Canon Law.⁵⁴ There is also a peculiar case of a treasure found with the help of magic tricks, which was predicted in the *Decretum*. According to the law, such a treasure ought to be returned to the owner of the land on which it had been discovered. However, if the accused had not been aided by any magic tricks, the law states that the treasure ought to stay in the hands of the finder.⁵⁵

The next two commandments, the eighth and ninth, are treated by the preacher in a slightly marginal manner. Concerning the eighth, he briefly mentions three cases of false testimony against God, judges, and innocent people.⁵⁶

54 *Decretum Gratiani*, pars II, causa 14, qu. 5, c. 6, c. 8, col. 739–740; *Decretalia Gregorii papae IX*, lib. V., tit. XXI, c. 1 et c. 2, *Corpus iuris canonici*, vol. 2, ed. E. Friedberg, Leipzig: 1879 [reprint: Graz 1959] col. 822–823; *Codex Iustinianus*, 2.1.39, in *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, vol. 1, ed. P. Krüger, Th. Mommsen, Berlin: 1872, s. 14; Augustinus, *Sermo ad populum CLXXVIII*, c. 8, in id., *Sermones de Scripturis*, ed. J.-P. Migne, Patrologia Latina 38, Paris: 1865, col. 965.

55 ‘Si in proprio aut invenit magica, sic thesaurus est heredis illius loci aut sine arte magica, sic thesaurus est inventoris’ (‘If someone finds a treasure through improper practices of magical arts, the treasure becomes the property of the owner of the land, and if it is found without magical arts – it goes to the finder’), *Sermo de praeceptis*, ms. BN 3022, fol. 94vb. See: Bernardino de Bustis, *Dominica secunda in Quadragesima. De praeceptis*, ed. F. Conti, *Preachers and confessors against “superstitions”. The Rosarium sermonum by Bernardino Busti and its Milanese Context (Late fifteenth Century)*, Doctoral Thesis (Budapest: 2011), s. 193 [www.etd.ceu.hu/2011/mpfcofo1.pdf]; Conti, “Preachers and Confessors against ‘Superstitions’” 78 ff. A similar accusation was made against Henry de Brega (Henricus Bohemus), an astrologist from Krakow, who fell into the hands of the Inquisition in 1429, on the suspicion of treasure hunting with the help of necromancy, and for this reason he was accused of heresy by Stanislaus of Skarbimierz. See: Wielgus S., “‘Consilia’ de Stanislas de Scarbimiria contre l’astrologue Henri Bohemus (Edition critique)”, *Studia Mediewistyczne* 25, 1 (1988) 153, 155, 157, 159–161; Zathey J., “Per la storia dell’ambiente magico-astrologico a Cracovia nel Quattrocento”, in Szczucki L. (ed.), *Magia, astrologia e religione nel rinascimento. Convegno polacco-italiano (Varsovia: 25–27 settembre 1972)*, Accademia Polacca delle Scienze. Biblioteca e Centro di Studii a Roma. Istituto di Filosofia e Sociologia. Conferenze, Fascicolo 65 (Wrocław – Gdańsk: 1974) 99–109; Adamczyk J., “Czary i magia w praktyce sądów kościelnych na ziemiach polskich w późnym średniowieczu (xv-połowa xvi wieku)”, in Koczerska M. (ed.), *Karolińscy pokutnicy i polskie średniowieczne czarownice. Konfrontacja doktryny chrześcijańskiej z życiem społeczeństwa średniowiecznego* (Warsaw: 2007) 216–217. See: Hirschberg S., “Schatz”, in *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, vol. 7 (Berlin – New York: 1987) 1002–1015.

56 ‘Octavum preceptum est: <Non falsum testimonium dices>, vulgariter Nyemow nyaszwego blissego szwadeczstwa falszywego. In quo precepto Deus prohibet, ut homo nulli nocumentum testimonium inferat, quam hoc abhominatio est apud Deum. [...] Primo Deo, quem preiurando et testificando false, graviter offendit. Secundo iudici, quem menciando fallit. Tercio innocenti, quem falso testimonio ledit et in rebus vel in fama’ (‘The eighth

In regard to the ninth commandment, the priest confines himself only to pointing out greed ('avaricia') as the reason behind violation of the commandment.⁵⁷

The final commandment brings with it an issue that relates to several previous commandments, but in a more precise way. Not only lewd acts, but also feeling lust falls under the commandment's sanctions. Therefore, as the moraliser explained, the essence of sin consists of desire in thought and speech, in focusing one's gaze on bodily shapes and admiring the beauty of someone's face, personal charm and grace. He then addresses three groups: the clergy, whom he compared to sons of Israel who spurned manna and chose onion and pork; those who do not want to turn their eyes away from forbidden and shameless acts; and those who do not wish to desire the wives of others themselves, but rather want to be desired and seduced by the wives of others. The preacher relates the latter to women rather than men. Married women dress their husbands in a way which makes them more handsome and more attractive, thereby arousing other women's desire, especially in public places, at dances, and even in church. In the choice of colours, in suave and overtly polite conversations, in fondling and leering, they harm the husbands' hearts and do damage to their souls, he explains.⁵⁸ The tirade against carnal love is a complete denunciation of romantic infatuation, which he condemns more than the other sins. It leads to a characteristic amnesia, *id est* forgetting death

commandment says "Thou shalt not bear false witness", in the vernacular *Nyemow nyaszwego blissego szwadeczstwa falszywego*. In this commandment God forbids man to give false testimony, because this is sacrilege [...] First, against God whom one offends gravely denying him and providing false testimony. Secondly, against judges whom by lying to one cheats. Thirdly, against the innocent whom through false testimony one brings to harm, both materially, as well as by slandering their good name'), *Sermo de praeceptis*, MS. BN 3022, fol. 94vb.

57 'Brathnych rzeczy nyekorzysty thako bosza kaszn gyszy. In quo precepto Deus prohibet peccatum mortale, quod (95ra) dicitur avaricia' ('In this commandment God forbids the mortal sin, which is called avarice'), *ibid.*, fols. 94vb–95ra.

58 'Non solum autem viri verum etiam et mulieres, que habentes viros proprios coram extraneis adhuc se ornant, ut fiant pulciores et abiliores et ut ab alienis concupiscantur in plateis et in coreis, sed heu et in ecclesiis corda virorum vulnerant dum coram eis nunc colore albo, nunc rubreo, nunc familiari et blando colloquio. Nunc manuum contractione, nunc vultus compositione, nunc oculorum lasciva comminatione laqueum et occisionem prestant rugiem. Et ex hoc virorum corda amore vulnerant et multa damna anime inferunt' ('Hence, not only the husbands but also the wives who clothe their husbands in such a way that they be more handsome and charming, and in this way arouse lust among other women, and in particular in public places, during dancing, or even in church, by choice of colours, sometimes white, sometimes red, in graceful and pleasant conversations, in caresses and by lustful looking, they wound the hearts of their husbands and cause numerous losses to their souls'), *ibid.*, fol. 95rb.

and the punishment for sins, to instability of soul and finally to scorn of the future redemption.⁵⁹ This concludes our analysis of the Polish preacher from the second half of the fifteenth century.

The discourse of the Decalogue in homiletic teaching from the sermon *De decem praeceptis* as presented above in a general outline is certainly neither original nor extraordinary. The exemplary material, which is a derivative of diverse social and ethnic circumstances, was still able to influence the distinctness of local teaching. The content of the religious teaching of the analysed sermon, however, presents a more universal, topos-like, casuistic discourse, and social diversities are poorly outlined. One cannot deny the preacher's knowledge of the reality of his day and a certain level of sociological and anthropological sensitivity. He often breached the boundaries of privacy, reached into very intimate aspects of life and touched bedroom secrets. He was probably made aware of these secrets through confessions and from his own experience. The norms of the Decalogue imposed a certain standardisation of content. Only the glossator's material, frequent inserts in Polish, and the Polish vernacular version of the Decalogue give evidence of a local Polish audience. The rhymed version of the Polish Decalogue irrefutably proves that the sermon, apart from the casuistic presentation of sins and behaviours falling outside the norms of the Decalogue, also played the role of a small catechism. In rhymed form and Old-Polish wording, it was easily absorbable by the lay audience, and it reminded parishioners annually of the content of one of the rudimentary prayers.⁶⁰

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The Law Illuminated: Biblical Illustrations of the Commandments in Lutheran Catechisms

Henk van den Belt

Martin Luther's *Deusch Catechismus* contains woodcuts that illustrate the main topics of the creed—such as the creation of the world, and the crucifixion of Christ—, the sacraments, the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments.¹ These woodcuts became very influential in the Lutheran catechetical tradition. This contribution assesses the woodcuts for the Ten Commandments from a theological perspective. What was Luther's original intention when he illuminated the catechetical explanation of the Law with these illustrations? Can anything be concluded about the choice of the scenes from the text of the catechism? After answering these questions we will take a quick look at the use of these illustrations in later Lutheran and Roman Catholic catechisms, and address the question of why they are absent in the Reformed tradition.

The woodcuts are not very impressive from an artistic perspective. The illustration of the third commandment ('Remember the Sabbath day') pictures a preacher, probably Martin Luther, on the pulpit with the congregation listening to him. The scene, however, seems to depict an open air sermon, because the background shows someone who is collecting wood. This is a reference to *Numbers* 15:32–36, where a man is punished for gathering wood on the Sabbath [Fig. 10.1].

In her excellent study of the Decalogue in late medieval and early modern paintings and illustrations, Veronika Thum reveals that the picture once included a crucifix between the preacher and the congregation and indeed, the

1 Luther Martin, *Deusch Catechismus: Gemehret mit einer neuen vnterricht vnd vermanung zu der Beicht* (Wittenberg, Georg Rhau: 1529). The *German Catechism* was later called the *Large Catechism* from the Latin *Catechismus Major*. It is not certain if the first edition of the *Deusch Catechismus* was illustrated. The woodcuts appear in the second edition that was enlarged with an *Exhortation to Confession*. The woodcuts for the Ten Commandments were also printed in an edition of Luther's sermons on the Law, see: Luther Martin, *Auslegung der Zehen gepot, aus dem xix. vnd .xx. Cap. des Andern buchs Mosi, gepredigt durch Mart. Luth* (Wittenberg, Georg Rhau: 1530). The illustrations can be found at dbs.hab.de/luther.



FIGURE 10.1 *Lucas Cranach, 'A wood-gatherer desecrates the Sabbath. Numbers 15: illustration of the third commandment', printed in Martin Luther, Deusch Catechismus. Gemehret mit einer neuen unterricht vnd vermanung zu der Beicht (Wittenberg: Georg Rhau, 1529), 11,2 × 7,4 cm, listed in the 'Katalog der Wolfenbütteler Luther-Drucke 1513 bis 1546' (<http://dbs.hab.de/luther/>) as H 943.*

remains of the loincloth are still visible. The original—the exact copy of which is lost—seems to have been a typical illustration of a congregation inside a church building, instead of a gathering outside. For the illustration of the third commandment the crucifix was simply cut out of the woodblock and replaced by the scene of the wood collector.² In some editions the publisher or perhaps an owner even decided to fill in the strange open space [Fig. 10.2].

In Luther's *Enchiridion* or *Kleine Catechismus*, the illustrations are only accompanied by the text of the commandment and one short question and answer, for instance: 'Das Erste gebot. Du solt nicht ander Götter haben. Was ist das? Antwort. Wir sollen Gott vber alle ding fürchten / lieben / vnd vertrauwen' ('The first commandment. You shall have no other gods. What does that mean? Answer: We must fear, love and trust God above everything').³

Apparently, the illustrations originally functioned as a visual tool underlining the message of the commandments. For the illiterate, these paratextual elements probably were aids to help them remember the words which most people in sixteenth-century Germany would have learned by heart as a child. The illustrations undoubtedly helped the children to memorize the text of the catechism as an explanation of the Ten Commandments. Possibly the text was read aloud by a teacher while the children were turning the pages of the catechism. The interesting and broader question of whether the images provoke meanings different from the text cannot be answered properly in the context of this article; indeed, it would be difficult to study the reception of the text and the images by the intended audience. Still, the illustrations frame the text of the commandments by placing them in a certain perspective.

That specific perspective appears already from the fact that short answers to the questions all start with the phrase that we must fear and love God. The ninth commandment, for instance, reads: 'Wir sollen Gott fürchten vnd lieben / Daß wir vnserm Nehesten nicht mit liste nach seinem Erbe oder Hause stehen / vnd mit einem schein des Rechtens an vns bringen / etc. Sondern jhm dasselbige zu behalten / fürderlich vnd dienstlich seyn' ('We must fear and love God, lest we craftily seek to get our neighbour's inheritance or house, and obtain it by a show of justice, etc., but help and assist him to keep it').⁴ Apparently,

2 Thum V., *Die Zehn Gebote für die ungelehrten Leut'. Der Dekalog in der Graphik des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, Kunstwissenschaftliche Studien 136 (Munich: 2006) 84. Thum refers to Grüneisen E., "Grundlegendes für die Bilder in Luthers Katechismus", *Luther-Jahrbuch* 20 (1938) 1–44.

3 Luther Martin, *D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 30 (Weimar: 1883–) 1, 354 [Hereafter: WA]. The translation is my own.

4 WA 30/1, 361. The translation is my own.



FIGURE 10.2 *Lucas Cranach (originally), 'Violation of the Sabbath: illustration of the third commandment,' printed in Martin Luther, Deusch Catechismus: gemehret mit einer neuen Vorrhede und vermanunge zu der Beicht (Wittenberg: Georg Rhau, 1530), 11,2 × 7,4 cm. This amended illustration is listed in the 'Pitts Theology Library Digital Image Archive' (pitts.emory.edu) as '1530LuthUU'. Courtesy of the Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection, Pitts Theology Library, Candler School of Theology, Emory University.*

from the Lutheran perspective the love and fear of God is the fulfilment of the Law.

Law and Gospel

In order to reflect further upon the theological intention behind the woodcuts and the specific perspective they offer for the interpretation of the Ten Commandments, we will first turn to the list of topics that were chosen to be illustrated. There are three illustrations for the first tablet of the Law and seven for the second, following the Lutheran (and Roman Catholic) division of the commandments. The illustrations are as follows:

1. *Exodus* 31–32 ~ Moses, the people of Israel and the golden calf
2. *Leviticus* 24 ~ The stoning of a blasphemer
3. *Numbers* 15 ~ Sabbath desecration by a wood collector
4. *Genesis* 9 ~ Noah and his sons
5. *Genesis* 4 ~ Cain and Abel
6. *2 Samuel* 11 ~ David and Bathsheba
7. *Joshua* 7 ~ Achan buries what he has stolen
8. *Daniel* 13 ~ Susanna and the elders
9. *Genesis* 30 ~ Jacob and Laban
10. *Genesis* 39 ~ Joseph and Potiphar's wife

The illustrations are chosen exclusively from the Old Testament, and seven are from the five books of Moses. Certainly, the New Testament could have offered illustrative examples of obedience, such as Jesus humbly subjecting himself to Mary and Joseph, as well as illustrative warnings against dishonesty and greed, such as the story of Ananias and Sapphira who withheld money intended for apostolic distribution to the poor. The choice for the Old Testament corresponds with the Lutheran emphasis on the distinction between Law and Gospel and the identification of the Law with the Old Testament. Whereas the Reformed tradition, especially in its later development, would emphasize the unity of both testaments—interpreting the relationship between them from Christ's statement that he came to fulfil the law—the Lutheran perspective on the Law is coloured by the distinction between law and grace and the understanding of the Law as a preparation for the Gospel.

The choice for only Old Testament illustrations can hardly be coincidental, given the fact that the illustrations of the petitions in the Lord's Prayer are exclusively taken from the New Testament: Jesus feeding the 5,000, for instance, illustrates the petition, 'Give us this day our daily bread', and the Canaanite

woman praying for her possessed daughter illustrates the petition, 'Deliver us from evil'.

A second aspect of the specifically Lutheran perspective is evident from the fact that all the Old Testament stories referred to in the illustrations are ones where the transgression of the commandment is punished; the stories, in other words, are examples of punished disobedience. The only exception is the depiction of Potiphar's wife, illustrating the tenth commandment. Joseph, whose obedience is severely tested and ultimately rewarded, serves as a positive example of blessed obedience. Of course, some of the negative illustrations also have a positive side; take, for instance, the attentive congregation in the woodcut of the third commandment, and Shem and Japheth in the woodcut of the fourth commandment. Nevertheless, in all these stories, the emphasis falls on the punishment of sin. Theologically, this corresponds with the Lutheran emphasis on the *usus elencticus* or *paedagogicus* of the Law. The Law confronts us with sin and its consequences in order to lead us to Christ. To quote Luther's *Short Form of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer* (1520), an early predecessor of the catechisms:

Also lehren die Gebote den Menschen seine Krankheit erkennen, daß er stehet und empfindet, was er thun und nicht thun, lassen und nicht lassen kann; und erkennet sich einen Sünder und bösen Menschen. Darnach hält ihm der Glaube für, und lehret ihn, wo er die Arzney, die Gnade finden soll, die ihm helfe fromm werden, daß er die Gebote halte; und zeigt ihm Gott und seine Barmherzigkeit in Christo erzeiget und angeboten. Zum dritten lehret ihn das Vater Unser, wie er denselben begehren, holen und zu sich bringen soll, nämlich mit ordentlichem, demüthigem, tröstlichem Gebet.

Thus the commandments teach man to recognize his sickness, enabling him to perceive what he must do or refrain from doing, consent to or refuse, and so he will recognize himself to be a sinful and wicked person. The Creed holds before him and teaches him where to find the medicine, the grace, that will help him to keep the commandments; and the Creed points him to God and his mercy, given and made plain to him in Christ. Third, the Lord's Prayer teaches him how to desire, obtain, and have this medicine brought to him, namely, with proper, humble, comforting prayer.⁵

5 WA 7, 204–205: The translation appears in Bierma L.D., *The Theology of the Heidelberg Catechism: A Reformation Synthesis* (Louisville: 2013) 22.

Independent Use

The woodcuts were originally made not for the catechisms, but for large placards or posters. These posters or broadsheets were commonly used for explaining the text of the Ten Commandments, the Twelve Articles of the Christian Faith, and the Lord's Prayer.⁶ They probably were used to teach the children the texts, and the pictures would have been printed next to the text on the posters.

None of the posters with the illustrations has survived, but there are some indications that the woodcuts were originally printed together on large broadsheets.⁷ Georg Rörer (1492–1557), who assisted Luther in translating the Bible and also served as his secretary for some time, had posters in his study, which he called *tabulae catechismi*. He lent them to Georg Spalatin (1484–1545), saying that they originally cost two or three pennies, but would now not even be available for a *Goldgulden*. These catechetical tablets were probably the posters with the collected catechism illustrations.⁸

According to Otto Albrecht, the editor of the volume in the *Weimarer Ausgabe* which contains Luther's catechisms, the woodcut illustrations were chosen by Philip Melancthon, who wanted to use them in his own catechism. Ultimately, only a fragment of that catechism was printed, because Melancthon decided not to compete with Luther's catechisms.⁹

Although there are different versions of the woodcuts, even in the various editions of Luther's catechism the stories chosen from the Bible remain the same. Other Lutheran authors, such as Andreas Osiander (1498–1552) and Nikolaus Gallus (1516–1570),¹⁰ also used pictures of exactly the same stories to explain the Ten Commandments in their catechisms. The same biblical scenes

6 WA 30/1, 561.

7 In 1923 Max Geisberg described a collection of eight catechism illustrations for the Lord's Prayer. The separated illustrations appeared to fit exactly into each other like pieces of a puzzle and so Geisberg could reconstruct the original broadsheet and conclude that these woodcuts were probably one of the lost editions in broadsheet form of Luther's Catechism, see: Geisberg M., "Cranach's Illustrations to the Lord's Prayer and the Editions of Luther's Catechism", *The Burlington Magazine* 43, 245 (1923) 84–87, esp. 86. Cf. Thum, *Zehn Gebote* 80.

8 Thum, *Zehn Gebote* 81–82. Thum refers to Reu J.M., *Katechetik oder Die Lehre vom kirchlichen Unterricht* (Chicago: 1918).

9 WA 30/1, 471–472. The fragment comes from Melancthon Philipp, *Ein kurtze auslegung der zehen gepot. Des vater unsers und glaubens* (Wittenberg, Georg Rhau: 1529).

10 Osiander Andreas, *Catechismus oder Kinderpredig* (Nuremberg, Johannes Petreius: 1536); Gallus Nikolaus, *Catechismus, predigweise gestelt für die Kirche zu Regensburg*

are depicted in German translations of Melanchthon's *Catechesis puerilis* by Kaspar Brusch (1518–1559).¹¹ Various printers and artists copied this selection of biblical scenes; the iconography changed little or not at all, even though the catechetical texts did not refer to the illustrations.

In the Latin catechisms the pictures are absent, probably because they were either intended for the instruction of students in Wittenberg or for pastors of local churches, or, as in the case of the shorter Latin catechism (the *Parvus catechismus*), they functioned as a textbook for younger students to learn Latin from familiar German texts.¹²

In sum, Melanchthon asked Cranach to make woodcuts for his catechism, which were first printed as posters to illustrate the texts of the Law, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, and then found their way into Luther's *Deudsch Catechismus*. Finally, the pictures of the biblical stories became standard illustrations in the Lutheran catechetical tradition.

Saxon Visitation

The illustrations in the broadsheets and catechisms served for the education of the common people. To understand their theological meaning, it is important to realize that the woodcuts were originally intended to speak for themselves; they were designed to educate children and the illiterate, with the biblical stories functioning as illustrations of the commandments. Thus, the woodcuts, like the images in Lutheran churches, functioned as books for the laity.

The catechisms and illustrations originated within the context of the visitations in Saxony between 1528 and about 1531, initiated because of concern about the chaotic conditions in the Lutheran parishes. The Saxon Visitations are hinted at in Luther's preface to his 1531 edition of the *Small Catechism*:

zum Methodo: das ist ordentlicher Summa christlicher Lere wider allerlei Newerung und Verfelschung (Regensburg, Hans Kohl: 1554).

- 11 The translation was printed both in Leipzig and Nuremberg; although the phrasing and the type page are exactly the same, the woodcuts differ slightly. See: Melanchthon Philipp, *Catechismus Das ist ein Kinderlehr* (Leipzig, Michael Blum: 1544); idem, *Catechismus Das ist ein Kinderlehr* (Nuremberg, Hans Guldenmund: 1544). For the Latin and German texts, see: Melanchthon Philipp, "Catechesis Puerilis", in *Supplementa Melanchthoniana*, F. Cohrs – P. Drews (eds.), *Schriften zur praktischen Theologie I. Katechetische Schriften* (Leipzig: 1915) 74–75.
- 12 Luther Martin, *Parvus catechismus pro pueris in schola* (Wittenberg: [s.n.], 1532).

Diesen Catechismon odder Christliche lere Inn solche kleine schlechte einfeltige form zu stellen, hat mich gezwungen und gedrunen die klegliche elende not, so ich newlich erfahren habe, do ich auch ein Visitor war. Hilff lieber Gott, wie manchen iamer habe ich gesehen, das der gemeine man doch so gar nichts weis von der Christlichen lere, sonderlich auff den dörrfern, und leider viel Pfarherr fast ungeschickt und untüchtig sind zu leren, Und sollen doch alle Christen heissen, getaufft sein und der heiligen Sacrament geniessen, können widder Vater unser noch den Glauben odder Zehen gebot, leben dahin wie das liebe vihe und unvernünfftige sewe, Und nu das Euangelium komen ist, dennoch fein gelernt haben, aller freiheit meisterlich zu missebrauchen.

The deplorable, wretched deprivation that I recently encountered while I was a visitor has constrained and compelled me to prepare this catechism, or Christian instruction, in such a brief, plain, and simple version. Dear God, what misery I beheld! The ordinary person, especially in the villages, knows absolutely nothing about the Christian faith, and unfortunately many pastors are completely unskilled and incompetent teachers. Yet supposedly they all bear the name Christian, are baptized, and receive the holy sacrament, even though they do not know the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments! As a result they live like simple cattle or irrational pigs and, despite the fact that the gospel has returned, have mastered the fine art of misusing their freedom.¹³

In 1527, Melanchthon drafted the *Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors*. Luther wrote a preface in which he states that the Elector must deal with those who require to be disciplined, just as the Emperor Constantine dealt with Arius.¹⁴ Melanchthon stressed that the Law must be preached so that the hearers repent of their sins and fear God. 'Darumb sollen sie die zehen gebot oft und vleyssig predigen, und die auslegen und anzeigen, nicht allein die gebot, sondern auch wie Gott straffen wird die, so sie nicht halten, wie auch Got solche oft Zeitlich gestrafft hat. Denn solche exempel sind geschriben, das man sie den leuten für halte' ('Therefore they shall often and diligently preach, explain and apply the Ten Commandments, and not only the commandments,

13 WA 30/1, 346–347: Kolb R. and Wengert T.J. (eds.), *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: 2000) 347–348.

14 Luther Martin, "Vorrhede", in *Opera quae supersunt omnia*, C.G. Bretschneider – H.E. Bindseil (eds.), *Corpus Reformatorum* 1–28 (Halle – Brunswick: 1834–1860) nr. 26, 41–46. [Hereafter: CR].

but also how God will punish those who do not keep them, as God has often inflicted such temporal punishment. For such examples are written in order to be presented to the people').¹⁵

This corresponds exactly with the observation that each biblical story illustrating the commandments, except for the last one, demonstrates that God punishes transgression. The sharp teaching of the Law is not an end in itself, but a means for the preparation of the Gospel. Sin and its punishment must be held forth to the people because contrition is a necessary condition for faith.

In sum, the catechisms, along with the illustrations, were generally meant to correct the ignorance of the common people, and to amend the tendency towards an antinomian interpretation of the Gospel by stressing the fact that God punishes sin. However, since Luther never commented on the illustrations or the biblical stories they depict in his explanation of the commandments, it is difficult to trace the theological meaning of the specific illustrations.¹⁶

The most important point seems to lie in the fact that Melanchthon and Luther chose the Bible, and especially stories from the Old Testament, to illustrate the Ten Commandments. This preference for Scripture is all the more remarkable given the fact that medieval illustrations of the Ten Commandments displayed in churches only incidentally refer to stories from the Bible.¹⁷ The woodcuts by Hans Baldung Grien (1484/1485–1545) in the 1516 edition of Marquard von Lindau's (d. 1392) popular *Buch der zehn Gebote* (1483), printed in Strasbourg, for instance, contain no biblical scenes.¹⁸

Even Martin Luther's vernacular explanations of the Ten Commandments, printed prior to his catechisms, use illustrations from everyday life instead of the Bible. Thus, for example, the sixth commandment is illustrated by a man

15 Melanchthon Philipp, "Unterricht der Visitatorn", in CR 26: 49–96, 52.

16 In his elaboration of Luther's *Larger Catechism* in questions and answers, however, Johann Spangenberg (1484–1550) does refer to the wood collector, see: Spangenberg Johann, *Der Gross Catechismus und Kinder Leere, D.M. Luth. Für die jungen Christen in Fragstücke verfasset* (Wittenberg, [s.n.]: 1544) 21b: 'Ists den so böse ein wenig holtz samlen am Sabbath? Nicht das holtz lessen am ihm selbs, sondern der ungehorsam ist böse' ('Is it that bad to gather a little wood on the Sabbath? Not the gathering of the wood in itself, but the disobedience is bad').

17 One of the exceptional exclusively biblical illustrations of the commandments is the "Göttinger Gebote-Triptychon" from around 1410. Two of the six commandments illustrated correspond to Melanchthon's illustrations, namely, the seventh and eighth commandments. Cf. Slenczka R., *Lehrhafte Bildtafeln in Spätmittelalterlichen Kirchen* (Cologne: 1998) 216. For some other examples, see: Thum, *Zehn Gebote* 87–91.

18 Lindau Marquard von, *Die zehen Gebot* (Strasbourg, Grüninger: 1516). Cf. Thum, *Zehn Gebote* 95–97.

and a woman in bed, and the seventh by a pickpocket.¹⁹ So the choice to use exclusively Old Testament histories to illuminate the message of the Law seems to be an iconographical renewal of the Reformation.

Melanchthon

Whereas Luther's texts reveal next to nothing about how the illustrations were used, the original initiator, Melanchthon, wrote texts to accompany the illustrations, as the excerpt from his unrealized catechism reveals. To understand the original theological intention of the woodcuts, one should therefore not turn to the final catechism texts, but to the unfinished and unpublished accompanying texts of Melanchthon, named "Short Explanation of the Ten Commandments (1527?)" in the critical edition of his works:

Das Erste (gepot). Du solt nicht andere Götter haben. Das erst gepot fodert Gottesfurcht und rechten glauben, Denn er dreuet strafte und vorheist hülffe in demselbigen. wie die geschicht des volcks Israel anzeigt.

The first (commandment). You shall have no other gods. The first commandment requires the fear of God and true faith, for in it He threatens to punish and promises to help, as the history of the people of Israel proves.

Das Ander. Du solt den namen deines Gottes nicht unnütz annemen. Recht brauchen Gottes namen ist, ihn anrufen in aller not, loben und dancken umb seine wolthat, *Psalmorum* 49. Und wil straffen, die des misbrauchen, wie dem *Levitici* 24. und den bauren im nehisten aufrur geschach.

The second. You shall not take the name your God in vain. The true use of God's name is to call upon Him in all need, and to praise and thank for His benefaction (*Psalm* 49). Also punish those who profane it, as happened to [the man] in *Leviticus* 24 and to the peasants in the late revolt.

Das Dritte. Du solt den feiertag heiligen. Das heist heiligen den feiertag, das man Gottes wort leret und höret. Solchen ungehorsam aber findet man gestrafft *Numeri* am. xv. an dem, der holtz las am Sabbath.

19 Luther Martin, *Der .x. gebot ein nutzliche erklerung* (Basel, Adam Petri: 1520).

The third. Sanctify the holy day. That is sanctifying the holy day to learn and hear God's word. Such disobedience is found to be punished in *Numbers* 15 to the man who gathered wood on the Sabbath.

Das Vierde. Du solt deinen vater und deine mutter ehren. Das Vierde gepot foddert gar ernstlich ehre und gehorsam gegen eltern und oberkeit an Gottes stat, wie das geschicht Noah zeigt, da Gott den gehorsamen segnet und den ungehorsamen verflucht.

The fourth. Honour your father and your mother. The fourth commandment commands very serious honour and obedience to parents and magistrates in God's place, as the history of Noah shows that God blesses the obedient and curses the disobedient.

Das Fünfft. Du solt nicht tödten. Das funfft verbeut nicht alleine todschlag, sondern auch neid und hass, *Matthei* v. Und Kains straffe zeigt an, wie kein todschlag ungestraft bleibt.

The fifth. You shall not kill. The fifth does not only forbid manslaughter (*Matthew* 5), but also envy and hatred and Cain's punishment shows how no manslaughter remains unpunished.

Das Sechst. Du solt nicht ehbrechen. Das sechste foddert ein keusch leben, *Matthei* v. Denn Gott straffte unkeuscheit hart, auch in seim liebsten diener David.

The sixth. You shall not commit adultery. The sixth commands chastity, for God punishes unchastity hard, even in his favourite servant David.

Das Siebend. Du solt nicht stelen. Wie hart Gott diebstal straffte, zeigt Achan, *Josua* vij.

The seventh. You shall not steal. How hard God punishes theft is demonstrated in Achan, *Joshua* 7.

Das Achte. Du solt nicht falsch gezeugnis reden wider deinen nehisten. Falsch zeugnis geben, den nehisten beliegen, verleumbden und afterreden strafft Gott ernstlich, wie Susanna geschicht zeigt, *Danielis* 13.

The eighth. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. God punishes bearing false witness, lying to, slandering and defaming your neighbour severely, as the history of Susanna shows, *Daniel* 13.

Das Neunde. Du solt nicht begeren deines nehisten haus. Gott weret und flucht dem geitz, wie er Jacob halff und Laban weret, *Genesis* 30.

The ninth. You shall not covet your neighbour's house. God counters and curses greed as He counters Laban and helps Jacob, *Genesis* 30.

Das Zehende. Du solt nicht begeren seines weibs, knecht, magd, vihe, odder was sein ist. Wie Gott gefallen hat an der keuscheit, hat er wol beweiset an dem fromen Joseph mit so grossen segen und gaben, *Genesis* 39.

The tenth. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife. That God is pleased by chastity He shows to the pious Joseph with such great blessings and gifts, *Genesis* 39.²⁰ [Fig. 10.3]

This extensive quotation shows several things. In the first place the fear of God is emphasized and connected to the threat of punishment and the promise of help. This, for instance, relates to the story of the people of Israel and the golden calf. Secondly, the strongest emphasis is on the punishment; God will punish those who profane his name and curse those who are disobedient—for example, Noah's curse upon his son. The illustration of Cain and Abel shows that murder does not remain unpunished. That this threat of punishment is, thirdly, really not an end in itself, but a means to lead sinners to the Gospel, does not appear very clearly in the text. Nevertheless, in the case of David, for instance, the intended audience was most likely familiar with David's repentance and the subsequent forgiveness of his sins. At least Melancthon says that unchastity is punished even in God's favourite servant David. Apparently, the original theological function of the pictures was to stress the fear of the Lord, the punishment of sin, and to explain the Law as a propaedeutic and pedagogic preparation for grace.

20 Melancthon Philipp, "Kurze Auslegung der zehn Gebote. 1527(?)", in Melancthon Philipp, *Supplementa Melancthoniana*, eds. F. Cohrs – P. Drews, *Schriften zur praktischen Theologie I. Katechetische Schriften* (Leipzig: 1915) 74–75.

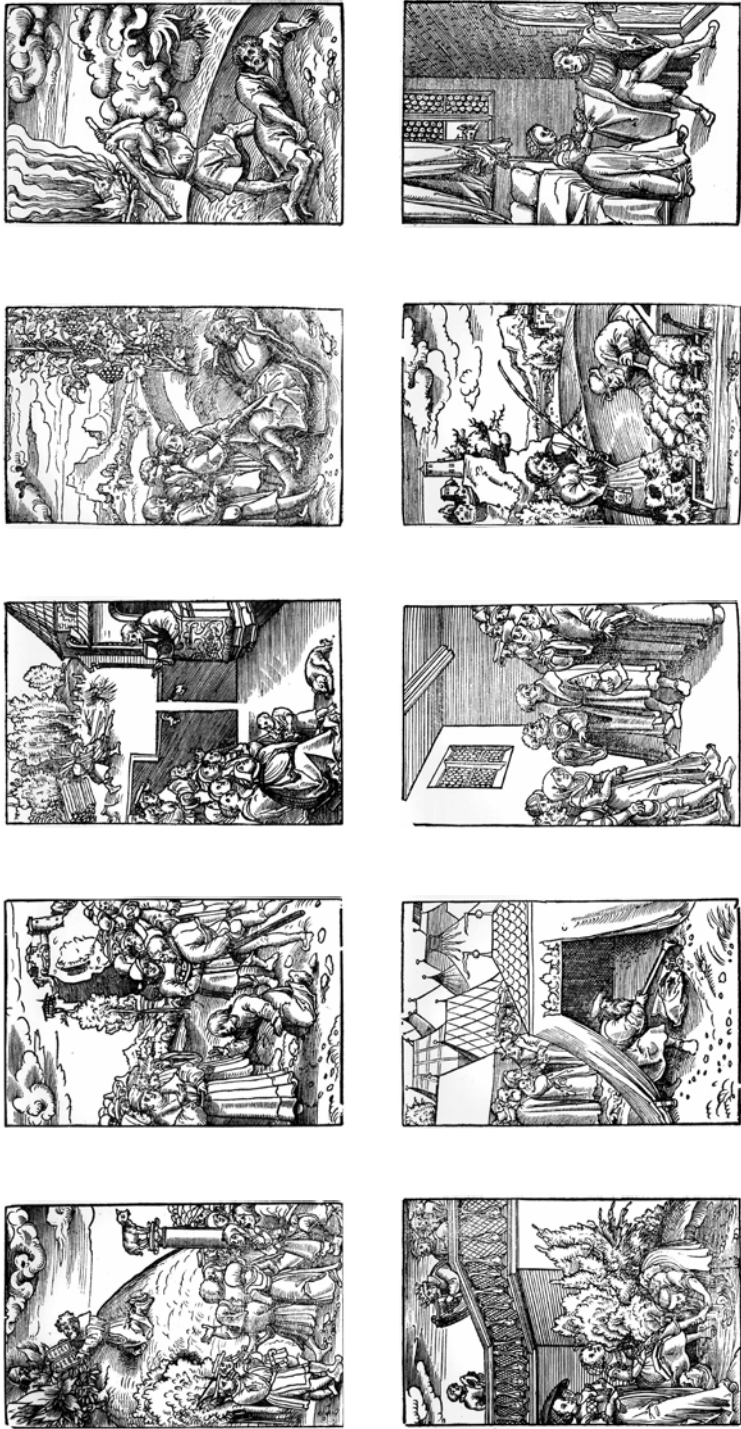


FIGURE 10.3 Lucas Cranach, 'Illustration of the ten commandments', printed in Martin Luther, Deutsch Catechismus. Gemehret mit einer neuen unterricht vnd vermanung zu der Beicht (Wittenberg: Georg Rhau, 1529), n.2 x 7.4 cm, listed in the 'Katalog der Wolfenbütteler Luther-Drucke 1513 bis 1546' (<http://dbs.hab.de/luther/>) as H 941, H 942, H 943, H 944, H 945, H 946, H 947, H 948, H 939 and H 950.

Peasants' Revolt

Because the choice of the illustrations originated with Philip Melanchthon, it is worthwhile to look at his other explanations of the Law, which help to elucidate the relationship between the chosen biblical stories and the respective commandments. Melanchthon's first exposition of the Ten Commandments originates from 1523, the so-called *Scholia on Exodus 20*.²¹ In this work Melanchthon does not refer to any of the biblical stories pictured in the later illustrations, except for that of David, whose example, like those of the flood and of Sodom and Gomorrah, shows how fiercely God punishes sins.²²

Twenty years later, Melanchthon published a Latin *Catechetical Instruction* (1543) based largely on what he had written about the Ten Commandments, The Creed, and the Lord's Prayer in his *Loci Communes*.²³ The Latin edition does not contain illustrations, but in the German translation of 1544 by Brusch, *Catechismus Das ist ein Kinderlehr*, the biblical illustrations reappear.²⁴

In this *Catechetical Instruction*, Melanchthon does refer to some of the examples portrayed in the woodcuts. Although the explanation of the first commandment does not explicitly mention the golden calf, Melanchthon states that it is a sin against this commandment 'to assign power to these images'. Brusch translates: 'oder geben denselben götzen, Bildern und Seulen eine kraft, als vermöchten sie was' ('to assign power to these idols, images and columns as if they could do anything').²⁵ This may reflect the illustration, given that the golden calf is always shown atop a column.

In his explanation of the second commandment, Melanchthon explicitly refers to the stoning of the blasphemer in *Leviticus 24*. Melanchthon affirms that the civil magistrate must punish swearing because the sworn oath, being the

21 Melanchthon Philipp, "In caput Exodi xx Scholia. (1523)", in *Supplementa Melanchthoniana*, F. Cohrs – P. Drews (eds.), *Schriften zur praktischen Theologie I. Katechetische Schriften* (Leipzig: 1915) 3–19. The text was anonymously translated into German in 1525 as *Eine kleine Auslegung uber das 20. Kapitel des 2. Buches Mose*.

22 Melanchthon, "Scholia" 14.

23 First Johann Brenz (1499–1570) had published Melanchthon's lectures on the themes of the Catechism in 1540, see: Cohrs F., "Einleitung und Bibliographie", in *Supplementa Melanchthoniana*, F. Cohrs – P. Drews (eds.), *Schriften zur praktischen Theologie I. Katechetische Schriften* (Leipzig: 1915) XXI–CLVI, LXVIII–LXIX. For the Latin and German texts, see: Melanchthon Philipp, "Catechesis Puerilis", in *Supplementa Melanchthoniana*, F. Cohrs – P. Drews (eds.), *Schriften zur praktischen Theologie I. Katechetische Schriften* (Leipzig: 1915) 89–336.

24 See note 12.

25 Melanchthon, "Catechesis Puerilis" 98: 'aut etiam vim ipsis statuis tribuunt'.

most important bond or commitment in civil society, must be protected and maintained by the government. Moreover, magistrates must outwardly enforce discipline to preserve the honour of God. The civil government must punish false oaths, all outward contempt of God's name and every instance of heresy, in addition to forbidding idolatry in all its forms. Such persons are those:

who sow false doctrines, after their case has been properly judged by godly and learned people. These punishments all are duties belonging to this commandment and have an example in the Law, *Leviticus* 24: Who shall have blasphemed the name of the Lord, shall surely be put to death.²⁶

This explanation in the *Catechetical Instruction* (1543) and its German translation (1544) shed light on the original function of the woodcut and the short text of Melanchthon in the "Short Explanation of the Ten Commandments (1527?)." The text he had written with the intention of explaining the woodcut also equated the blasphemer in the Old Testament with the peasants in the German peasants' revolt.

Apparently the second commandment and its Old Testament illustration had a very practical and political application in backing up the Protestant civil government's efforts to defend the reverent use of God's name in public, and to punish all profanation of it. Both Melanchthon and Luther defended the severe repression of the *Bauernkrieg* of 1524–1525 by the Protestant princes in Germany. Thus the *Catechetical Instruction* reveals why the "Short Explanation" of this commandment—a text originally intended to be placed next to Cranach's woodcuts—refers to the peasants in the revolt.

It is not immediately clear why Melanchthon found the rebellious peasants guilty of blasphemy, but in his *Against the Murderous, Thieving Hordes of Peasants* (1525), Luther accused them of violating their oaths of loyalty to the government and using the Gospel to justify their sins; in calling themselves Christian brothers and binding themselves by oaths, 'sie die aller grosten Gottslesterer und schender seynes heyligen namen werden und ehren und dienen also dem teuffel unter dem scheyn des Euangelij, daran sie wol zehen mal den tod verdienen an leib und seele' ('they become the worst blasphemers and violators of God's holy name honouring and serving the devil under the cloak of the Gospel, deserving a tenfold death of body and soul').²⁷ In general, the

26 Ibid., 130–131: 'Item puniat haereticos, ferentes falsa et impia dogmata, postquam res a piis et doctis rite iudicata est. Hae poenae omnes sunt officia huius praecepti, et habent exemplum in lege, Levitici 24: Qui blasphemaverit nomen Domini, morte morietur'.

27 WA 18, 358.

magisterial reformers argued that the Protestant magistrates were allowed and obliged to defend the pure evangelical faith against the heresies of the Radical Reformation.

Sabbath

In the *Scholia on Exodus 20* (1523), Melanchthon interpreted the third commandment on the Sabbath in an exclusively spiritual way, construing it as an injunction to mortify the flesh and vivify the spirit. We must cease all our legal works and allow the Spirit to work within us: 'The death of Christ is our Sabbath and the mortification of our flesh'.²⁸ This reading leads one to ask how this commandment relates to the later picture of the wood collector whose punishment for working on the Sabbath served as a warning to sanctify the holy day.

In the *Catechetical Instruction* (1543) and its German translation (1544) Melanchthon emphasizes that the commandment must also be outwardly observed through attendance of church services and participation in the sacraments. This emphasis wholly differs from his remarks twenty years earlier. He distances himself from the view that the commandment to keep the Sabbath exclusively means that we should rest and let God work in and through us, although he nevertheless seems reluctant to reject this formerly held allegorical explanation entirely.²⁹ For Melanchthon, the crucial meaning of the commandment is that we should maintain God-given ceremonies. It is a sin against this commandment if you never or seldom attend church services or 'work deliberately on holy days, thus hindering the ministry of the Word and its ceremonies'.³⁰ Thus, although there is no explicit reference to the story of the punished wood collector, the later explanation of Melanchthon underlines a point that he had only made implicitly in earlier days by the choice of this illustration. The implicit paratextual message of the wood collector proved to last longer than the spiritualized interpretation in Melanchthon's *Scholia on Exodus 20* (1523), even though the explanation of the third commandment in the *Catechetical Instruction* (1543) does not refer to the story of the man who collected wood on the Sabbath.

28 Melanchthon, "Scholia" 7: 'Christi mors nostrum est sabbathum, nostrae carnis mortificatio'.

29 Melanchthon, "Catechesis Puerilis" 149.

30 Ibid., 137: 'Operas, quae impediunt ministerium verbi et ceremoniarum, die festo contumaciter exercere'.

In the *Catechetical Instruction* (1543), Melanchthon does mention the story of Noah and his sons: ‘The example of the sons of Noah instructs us, how to pardon the weakness [of the government]; Cham is cursed because he mocks his father who was stripped naked.’³¹ In general, we have to be patient with each other’s weaknesses in marriage, in family, and in friendships. Moreover, when a ruler, who is not a tyrant, makes sinful mistakes, you should conceal and tolerate them.

As for all the other chosen biblical illustrations of the Ten Commandments, they hardly function in Melanchthon’s exposition of the Law. He does not mention Achan, Susanna, Jacob, or Laban. He does briefly refer to the story of Cain and Abel in his explanation of the fifth commandment.³² David is given as an example in his explanation of the sixth commandment, but in the immediate context he also refers to the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, the men of Shechem who raped Jacob’s daughter Dina, the Israelites who slept with the Moabites, the tribe of Benjamin, and the sons of Eli. They are all examples of how God punishes unchastity. The example of Joseph’s rejection of Potiphar’s wife functions positively—not in the explanation of the tenth, but of the sixth commandment—to demonstrate that God rewards obedience.³³ To the long list of biblical examples, Melanchthon, the *Praeceptor Germaniae*, added many more from world history as he apparently understood how important examples are for education.

Melanchthon only mentions the biblical scenes of the illustrations in passing, and some not at all. His later explanations of the commandments do not clarify his choice of the scenes in the woodcuts, but sometimes they unintentionally reveal something about the message Melanchthon had in mind when he chose the illustrations, as in the case of the blasphemy (the second commandment), the Sabbath (the third commandment), and disobedience to parents and magistrates (the fourth commandment).

Reception

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries hardly any Lutheran catechisms appeared without some or all of these illustrations. They occasionally show up in Latin editions, but it is mainly in the vernacular that they are used to illuminate

31 Ibid., 181: ‘De condonationem aliquarum imbecillitatum admonet nos exemplum filiorum Noe Cham maledicitur, quod irridet patrem, qui casu nudatus fuerat’.

32 Ibid., 233.

33 Ibid., 236–237, 243.

the Law.³⁴ It would be useful to examine the later catechisms systematically, to see whether they include explanations of the biblical illustrations or, alternatively, whether the pictures operate independently or parallel to the texts, telling their own story. In any case, once Luther's catechisms gained confessional status in the *Book of Concord* (1580), generations of Lutherans were brought up with these catechisms and their illustrations.

It is remarkable that the biblical scenes formerly chosen by Melanchthon also appear in some Roman Catholic catechisms, such as the Latin *Catechism* of Michael Holding (1506–1561) and its German translation.³⁵ Although the Flemish theologian Josse van Clichtove (1472–1543) frequently wrote in opposition to Luther, he included the illustrations in his German and Dutch translations of his Latin *Evangelical and Christian Sermons on The Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria, the Ten Commandments, and the Seven Sacraments*.³⁶

Illustrations are conspicuously absent, however, from Reformed catechisms. An exception is Martin Bucer's *Kürtzer Catechismus*, printed in Strasbourg in 1537.³⁷ Although the Ten Commandments expounded here are not all illustrated from biblical scenes, six of the illustrations are the same as those in the Lutheran catechisms. The illustrations were drawn by Hans Baldung Grien, who had previously illustrated an edition of the medieval *Buch der zehn Gebote*, in which the pictures and chosen narratives were different.

An English translation of Justus Jonas's 1548 *Catechismus* by Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556) is another exception, and also contains the illustrations from the Lutheran catechism.³⁸ In this case, of course, a Lutheran cat-

34 Jonas Justus, *Catechismvs Pro Pveris Et Iuuentute* (s.l., Petrus Seitz: 1539).

35 Holding Michael, *Catechismus catholicus* (Cologne, Quentel & Calenium: 1562); and id., *Catechismus, Das ist, Christliche Vnderweisung vnd gegründter Bericht, nach warer Euangelischer vnd Catholischer lehr, vber die Furnembste stücke vnsers hailigen allgemeinen Christen glaubens* (Mainz, Franz Behem: 1557).

36 Clichtove Josse van, *Euangelische vnnnd Christenliche Predige[n] / Judoci Clichtouei vo[n] dem Vatter vnser, Aue Maria, Glauben, zehen Gebot, vnd sibem Sacramenten* (Ingolstadt, s.n.: 1547); Clichtove Josse van, *Hier beginnen seer schoone christelycke ende evangelische sermoenen, opten Vader onse, Ave Maria vanden gheloove, Thien Gheboden, ende de seven Sacramenten* (s.l., s.n.: 1554).

37 Bucer Martin, *Martin Bucers Katechismen auf den Jahren 1534, 1537, 1543*, Martin Bucers deutsche Schriften, vol. 6.3 (Gütersloh: 1960–); Cf. Kohls E.W., "Holzschnitte von Hans Baldung in Martin Bucers kürtzer Catechismus", *Theologische Zeitschrift* 23, 4 (1967) 267–284; Bast R.J., *Honor Your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, 1400–1600* (Leiden: 1997) 10. For a detailed discussion of the woodcuts see: Thum, *Zehn Gebote* 97–101.

38 Cranmer Thomas, *A short instruction into Christian religion, a catechism set forth by archbishop Cranmer in MDXLVIII. Together with the same in Lat., tr., from the Germ., by J. Jonas*, ed. E. Burton (Oxford: 1829).

echism was transferred into the context of the Church of England, where both Lutheran and Reformed influences were present.

The reason for the general absence of illustrations in Reformed Catechisms is probably that the Reformed disallowed images in their churches. The Heidelberg Catechism, for instance, states that images should not be tolerated in the churches as 'books for the laity' because God wants his people to be taught through the preaching of his living Word. It would therefore have been strange to see the catechism printed with pictures. This catechism was intended to promote the change in the Palatinate from the Lutheran to the Reformed confession. It contains marginal notes referring to passages from the Bible, but the only overlap between the texts referenced and the Lutheran illustrations are the stories of Noah and his sons, and the stoning of the blasphemer.

Another problem the Reformed may have had with the Lutheran illustrations was a drawing of God the Father in some of the woodcuts; any image of God was forbidden in accordance with the Reformed reading of the second commandment (the second part of the first commandment in the Lutheran counting). In the early Reformed tradition, however, this prohibition was not so strictly enforced; thus Bucer's catechism does contain a picture of God creating Eve out of Adam. Of course, Reformed authors might also have been critical of the exclusive identification of the Law with the Old Testament, and they may also have been uncomfortable with the apocryphal status of the story of Susanna and the Elders, but these criticisms do not seem to be sufficient reasons to leave all illustrations out of their catechisms.

Conclusion

If we return to the question of why Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon chose to expound the Ten Commandments by means of illustrations, we can summarize our findings as follows. In the first place, the illustrations, when compared to those used in medieval explanations of the Decalogue or even to those used by Luther prior to publication of the catechisms, mark a turn to the Scripture as the primary source of practical instruction for the uneducated.

Secondly, the illustrations convey a typically Lutheran emphasis on the Law as a preparation for the Gospel; the stories from the Bible all underscore the point that sin is punished. Theologically this corresponds with the Lutheran emphasis on the *usus elencticus* or *paedagogicus* of the Law. In the words of Melancthon's *Instructions* for the Saxon Visitations, not only must the Ten Commandments be preached, but the preacher must also show 'how God will punish those who do not keep them'. Originating in the context of the visitations, the illustrations function as aids to reform the lives of the common

people by teaching them the basic texts of the Christian faith, as well as the basic meaning of these texts.

Thirdly, it is remarkable that the illustrations, which originated on separately printed broadsheets, are barely mentioned in the catechetical explanation of the commandments. They apparently contained a message of their own, conveyed independently of the texts of the catechisms.

Finally, in some cases the specific meaning and intention of the illustrations can be deduced from the related texts (for instance, from the catechetical explanations of the Decalogue by Melanchthon). Thus, the illustration of the stoning of a blasphemer (*Leviticus* 24) affirms the right of civil magistrates to punish revolt and to construe it as a form of abuse of God's holy name. The illustration with the background scene of the wood collector desecrating the Sabbath (*Numbers* 15), while a sermon is preached in the foreground, marks a shift in emphasis from an earlier spiritual understanding of this commandment to an explanation in which the outward observance of the commandment through church attendance is strongly emphasized. Early on, Melanchthon stressed that Christians should rest from their legal works because the death of Christ is their Sabbath, but later he states that Christians should go to church on Sundays. Cranach's substitution for the crucifix by the wood collector should probably be seen in this light. How these two illustrations relate to the Peasants' Revolt and to the spiritualizing tendencies of the Radical Reformation is a subject for further investigation.

The illustrative scenes chosen by Melanchthon circulated widely in sixteenth and seventeenth century Lutheran vernacular catechisms, as well as in some Roman Catholic catechisms, but they were not taken up by Reformed catechists. This difference most likely is reflective of the Reformed rejection of religious images as 'books for the laity', and their conviction that God cannot, indeed, must not, be pictured.

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Man and God: The First Three Commandments in the Polish Catholic Catechisms of the 1560s–1570s

Waldemar Kowalski

Catechism: A New Tool in Religious Instruction

The sixteenth century brought a number of fundamental and far-reaching changes in the Polish Church's approach to the *cura animarum* (cure of souls). In practice, the laity previously had cursory access to the fundamentals of the faith. From the end of the Middle Ages up until the mid-seventeenth century, elementary catechesis was limited to the repetition of the *Pater noster*, *Credo*, *Ave Maria* and the Decalogue before the Sunday Mass. An average priest was able to mobilize his parishioners to repeat the Ten Commandments and to memorize the relevant verses, following synodical recommendations. It was a far more difficult task, however, to explain convincingly the moral obligations arising from them. Hypothetically these rudiments of faith were taught more effectively during the second half of the sixteenth century.¹ One of the explanations for these changes was the relative growth in the ranks of the educated laity. This was also at least partly due to the proliferation of printed catechisms. They were composed and published with a view to explaining and promoting the principles of the faith in opposition to Lutheran and, later, Reformed attempts to evangelize the population. The fight against 'heresy', the reason for which the provincial synod in Piotrków convened in 1525, was thereafter to become part of a wider reform programme within the Church.² Such a

- 1 For a thorough discussion of the possibilities and limitations of religious education at the turn of the modern age, see: Bylina S., *Religijność późnego średniowiecza* (Warsaw: 2009) 26–38. Cf. Dykema P., "Handbooks for Pastors: Late Medieval Manuals for Parish Priests and Conrad Porta's *Pastorale Lutheri* (1582)", in Bast R.J. – Gow A.C. (eds.), *Continuity and Change: The Harvest of Late-Medieval and Reformation History. Essays Presented to Heiko A. Oberman on his 70th Birthday* (Leiden – Boston – Cologne: 2000) 149–150; Duffy E., *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1400—c. 1580* (New Haven – London: 2005) 53–63.
- 2 A selection of the most recent and important publications discussing various aspects of Church reform in Poland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries would include: Wyczawski H.E., "Studia nad wewnętrznymi dziejami Kościoła w Małopolsce na schyłku XVI wieku", *Prawo Kanoniczne* 7, 1–2 (1964) 45–126; *ibidem* 7, 3–4 (1964): 21–116; Bylina S.,

programme did not crystallize, however, until the 1560s, and it would not prove effective on a large scale within the Gniezno Church province until the turn of the seventeenth century. Indeed, it remains unclear to what extent the laity's access to religious education really increased. The following presentation of the exegesis of the first three commandments in sixteenth-century Polish Catholic catechisms sheds some light on the poorly studied effectiveness of instruction in the rudiments of the faith.

In sixteenth-century Poland, around twenty Catholic catechisms were published. Almost all of these were printed in Cracow, with the overall number of editions estimated at fifty (twenty-eight Latin editions, twenty-one in Polish, and one in German). The majority of these were reprints of foreign works which were popular at the time: Georg Witzel's handbook *Questiones cathedasticæ* (1543), Petrus Canisius's *Parvus catechismus catholicorum* (1565 and subsequent eight editions), and Anthony Possevino's *Epistola de necessitate utilitateque ac ratione docendi catholici catechismi* (1583). The catechism, or rather, confessional document of the Warmian (Ermland) bishop, Stanislaus Hosius's, *Confessio fidei catholice christiana*, was first published in Cracow in 1553, and was widely circulated throughout Europe soon after.³ Some of these imports were translated into Polish, such as Jacob Ledesma's *Christian Teaching or a Small Catechism for Infants* (1572). The first Polish translation of the *Roman Catechism* (1568) by Walenty Kuczborski is a relatively faithful rendition of the Latin original, which had been edited two years before. The catechisms of Polish Catholic authors written in Polish or published in

"Jednostka i zbiorowość w pobożności ludowej Europy środkowowschodniej w późnym średniowieczu", in Michałowski R. et al. (eds.), *Człowiek w społeczeństwie średniowiecznym* (Warsaw: 1997) 119–131; idem, *Chryścianizacja wsi polskiej u schyłku średniowiecza* (Warsaw: 2002); Hochleitner J., *Religijność potrydencka na Warmii (1551–1655)* (Olsztyn: 2000) 193–201; Kracik J., "Przeciw Reformacji", in *Kościół krakowski w tysiącleciu* (Cracow: 2000) 169–274; Wiślicz T., *Zarobić na duszne zbawienie. Religijność chłopów małopolskich od połowy XVI do końca XVIII wieku* (Warsaw: 2001) 28–38; Marczewski J.R., *Duszpasterska działalność Kościoła w średniowiecznym Lublinie* (Lublin: 2002) 324–326; Ożóg K., "Pastor bonus – duszpasterskie zabiegi biskupa Zbigniewa Oleśnickiego w diecezji krakowskiej", in Kiryk F., Noga Z. (eds.), *Zbigniew Oleśnicki: Księżę Kościoła i mąż stanu* (Cracow: 2006) 157–180; Skierska I., *Obowiązek mszalny w średniowiecznej Polsce* (Warsaw: 2003); eadem, "Pleban w późnośredniowiecznej Polsce", in Fałkowski W. (ed.), *Kolory i struktury średniowiecza* (Warsaw: 2004) 155–180; eadem, *Sabbatha sanctifices. Dzień święty w średniowiecznej Polsce* (Warsaw: 2008); Kaleta M., "Synody prowincjonalne arcybiskupa Jana Łaskiego", in Tymosz S. (ed.), *Arcybiskup Jan Łaski reformator prawa* (Lublin: 2007) 133–154; Wronowski R., "Synody archidiecezjalne arcybiskupa Jana Łaskiego", in ibidem 155–164; and Chachaj J., *Blżej schizmatyków niż Krakowa. Archidiaconat lubelski w XV i XVI wieku* (Lublin: 2012) 192–195.

3 For a list of sixteenth-century editions, see: *The Universal Short Title Catalogue* (<http://ustc.ac.uk>).

both Latin and Polish language versions increased in frequency only during the 1560s.⁴

The Church addressed many of the everyday social issues that occupied both the laity and the clergy. In accordance with long-established methods of preaching, it recommended how the faithful ought to behave and conduct themselves as the Law of God requires, and included morally salient examples of what to beware of when choosing to walk this designated path.⁵ In the same vein, sermons often focused on distinguishing morally right conduct from bad behaviour. The degree to which they influenced such behaviour was seen as the primary criterion when it came to determining the sermons' effectiveness as instruments of instruction.⁶ The Commandments, as inscribed on the two tablets, provide a synopsis of the entire divinely revealed law, and the authors of the *Roman Catechism* state this expressly. In accordance with the catechesis of the Catholic Church, the first three commandments define man's duties toward God.⁷ Therefore, my aim in this essay is to show how the obligation

4 For more information on those editions, see: Rusiecki M., *Przedmiot katechezy potrydenckiej w Polsce (1566–1699)* (Lublin: 1996); Kuźmina D., *Katechizmy w Rzeczypospolitej XVI i początku XVII wieku* (Warsaw: 2002); Słowiński J.Z., *Katechizmy katolickie w języku polskim od XVI do XVIII wieku* (Lublin: 2005); Pawlik W., *Katechizmy w Rzeczypospolitej od XVI do XVIII wieku* (Lublin: 2010). As a starting point to the vast literature on the importance of catechetical teachings, the relevant Church tradition and the place of the Decalogue, see: Bast R.J., *Honor Your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, 1400–1600* (Leiden – New York: 1997); Jensen G.A., “Shaping Piety Through Catechetical Structures: The Importance of Order”, *Reformation & Renaissance Review: Journal of the Society for Reformation Studies* 10 (2008) 223–246; Carter K.E., *Creating Catholics: Catechism and Primary Education in Early Modern France* (Notre Dame: 2011) and Palmer Wandel L., *Reading Catechisms, Teaching Religion* (Leiden – Boston: 2015).

5 See especially: Bylina S., “Licitum—illicitum. Mikołaj z Jawora o pobożności masowej i zabobonach”, in Geremek B. (ed.), *Kultura elitarna a kultura masowa w Polsce późnego średniowiecza* (Wrocław, 1978) 137–153 and Bracha K., *Nauczanie kaznodziejskie w Polsce późnego średniowiecza. Sermones dominicales et festuales z tzw. kolekcji Piotra z Miłostawia* (Kielce: 2007).

6 For more on this, see: Związek J., “Katolickie poglądy polityczno-społeczne w Polsce na przełomie XVI i XVII wieku w świetle kazań”, *Studia Kościelnohistoryczne* 2 (1977) 9–125; Jabłoński M., “Teoria duszpasterstwa (wiek XVI–XVIII)”, in Rechowicz M. (ed.), *Dzieje teologii katolickiej w Polsce*, vol. 2, *Od Odrodzenia do Oświecenia*, pt. 1, *Teologia Humanistyczna* (Lublin: 1975) 337, 345 and Brzozowski M., “Teoria kaznodziejstwa (wiek XVI–XVIII)”, *ibidem* 377–383.

7 Cf. Bradley R.L., *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church. The Structure of the Roman Catechism as Illustrative of the ‘Classic Catechesis’* (Lanham, MD: 1990) 27, 42.

to keep these commandments was relayed to Polish Catholics in the mid-sixteenth century.

Catechisms and their Authors

In order to show how the first three commandments were presented, I have chosen four catechisms used at the time in the Cracow diocese, part of the Gniezno ecclesiastical province: the catechisms by Benedykt Herbest, Marcin Białobrzewski, and Hieronim Powodowski, and the aforementioned adaptation of the *Roman Catechism*. The popularity of these handbooks is borne out by the preservation of numerous copies to this day, as well as by library inventories dating from the turn of the seventeenth century.⁸ These works were designated to serve as practical guides for the exercise of the pastoral ministry. This function distinguishes them from the dogmatic works of Stanislaus Hosius⁹ and Marcin Kromer,¹⁰ which were directed towards a narrower circle of readers with broader theological horizons.

The Teaching of a Righteous Christian by Benedykt Herbest (1531–1598) was the first catechism written originally in Polish. The publishing house of Mateusz Siebeneicher issued it in 1566. Herbest was a famous preacher, a senior lecturer at Cracow University, a member of the Lubrański Academy in Poznań, and a canon of the Poznań chapter; he entered the Jesuit order in 1569. As a theologian and controversialist he fought against the anti-Trinitarians.¹¹

8 Pawlik, *Katechizmy w Rzeczypospolitej* 96 and Wyczawski H.E., "Biblioteki parafialne w diecezji krakowskiej u schyłku XVI wieku", *Polonia Sacra* 7 (1955) 44.

9 *Confessio fidei catholicae christiana* [...] *Pars prior* (Cracow, Mikołaj Scharffenberger: 1553); *Confessio catholicae fidei Christiana: vel potius explicatio quaedam confessionis a patribus factae in synodo provinciali, quae habita est Petrikovie anno Domini MDLI mense Maio congregatis* (Mainz, Franz Behem, Johannes Patruus: 1557), see also: Hipler F., "Die Biographien des Stanislaus Hosius: ein Gedenkblatt zur dritten Säcularfeier seines Todestages am 5. August 1879", *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte Ermlands* 7 (1879) 113–176 and Wojtyńska H.D., *Cardinal Hosius: Legate to the Council of Trent* (Rome: 1967).

10 *Catecheses to iest napominania y nauki* [...] *o siedmi świętościach, o ofierze Mszy S., o obchodzie przy pogrzebie ludzi krześcijańskich* (Cracow, Mikołaj Scharffenberger: 1570). See also: Gulik G. van – Eubel K. (eds.), *Hierarchia catholica medii aevi, sive Summorum Pontificum, S.R.E. cardinalium, ecclesiarum antistitum series. Ab anno 1198 usque ad annum 1605 perducta*, vol. 3 (Münster: 1910) 327.

11 *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* (Cracow, Mateusz Siebeneicher: 1566); Wyczawski H.E., "Herbest (Herbestus, Neapolitanus) Benedykt", in Wyczawski H.E. (ed.), *Słownik polskich teologów katolickich*, vol. 4 (Warsaw: 1982) 11 36–37 and Rabiej S., "Herbest, Herbestus

Herbest's catechism opens with a concise treatise on fundamental theology, *De ecclesia catholica*. According to the model of Aquinas, Herbest lays out the Christian's obligations in three parts: "Credo", "O nadziei i pacierzu" ("On Hope and Prayer"), and "O miłsi i przykazaniu Bożm" ("On Love and the Divine Commandment"), which correspond to the three theological virtues.¹² Teachings on the Commandments are, according to the author, fundamental to the reader because of their practical significance. The catechism takes the form of a dialogue between a burgher and his spiritual advisor.¹³ The choice of a burgher as the priest's interlocutor was to prove influential, as was the range of examples used to argue points of doctrine. This was presumably dictated by the author's pastoral experience. In accordance with late medieval tradition, the author emphasises that one must meditate over the Ten Commandments in preparation of the sacrament of Penance.¹⁴

In 1567, the workshop of the Cracow typographer Mikołaj Scharffenberger published the *Catechism or a Vision of the True Christian Faith* by Marcin Białobrzeski (ca. 1530–1586). The author was a Cistercian abbot of the Mogiła Abbey near Cracow, an auxiliary bishop of the Cracow diocese from 1565, and a bishop in Kamieniec Podolski from 1577. He was famous not only as the author of a number of theological and polemical works, but also as a royal diplomat and as a humanist responsive to the works of Erasmus.¹⁵

Białobrzeski's catechism is also arranged according to the conventional form of questions and answers, certain parts of which he expands into short sermons. The *Catechism* is modelled on that of Hosius, whose anti-Trinitarian doctrine Białobrzeski closely followed.¹⁶ The Decalogue occupies a prominent

Neapolitanus, Benedykt SJ", in Walkusz J. (ed.), *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 20 (Lublin: 1993) IV 741.

12 Cf. Bast, *Honor Your Fathers* 5 and Jensen, "Shaping Piety" 226.

13 Słowiński, *Katechizmy katolickie*, 83–84; Pawlik, *Katechizmy w Rzeczypospolitej*, 96, 102; and Kuźmina, *Katechizmy w Rzeczypospolitej*, 35–36.

14 On the Ten Commandments in relation to the sacrament of Penance, see: Bracha K., "Pierwsze przykazanie w katechezie późnośredniowiecznej w świetle komentarzy do Dekalogu", in Iwańczak W. – Bracha K. (eds.), *Nauczanie w dawnych wiekach. Edukacja w średniowieczu i u progu ery nowożytnej. Polska na tle Europy* (Kielce: 1997) 119–134.

15 *Katechizm, albo wizerunek prawej wiary chrześcijańskiej* (Cracow, Mikołaj Scharffenberger: 1567); Wyczawski H.E., "Białobrzeski Marcin", in *Słownik polskich teologów katolickich* I 131–132; and Noga Z. – Oboza A., "Szarffenberger (Scharffenberger, Szarfenberg, Scharffenberg) Mikołaj (ca. 1519–1606)" in Romanowski A. (ed.), *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 50 (Warsaw – Cracow: 2010) XLVII 91–93.

16 Brzozowski M., "Białobrzeski Marcin SOCist", in Gryglewicz F. (ed.), *Encyklopedia katolicka* (1995) II 365–366.

place within the work, for it comes immediately after the explanation of the principles of the faith, such as the existence of God, the creation of the world, the foundation of the Church and its meaning for the salvation of man.¹⁷

In 1568, a year and a half after the publication of the Latin original, the Cracow printing house of Mikołaj Scharffenberger issued the first Polish translation of the *Catechismus Romanus*. The translator of *Catechismus, ex decreto Concilii Tridentini, ad parochos* (*The Catechism for Parsons, Compiled by Decree of the Council of Trent*),¹⁸ Walenty Kuczborski (1525–1572), was a close colleague of Cardinal Stanislaus Hosius—who commissioned the translation. The copy-editing was done by Tomasz Płaza (1512–1593), a priest connected with Cracow and Wiślica (the two major ecclesiastical centres of the day) and a publisher of the works of Stanislaus Hosius.¹⁹ However, as the translator repeatedly emphasises, this catechism was designed first and foremost for the clergy; it does not seem to have broadly served as a compendium of the faith. This is borne out by the soon to follow, and more widely used, catechism of Hieronim Powodowski. Moreover, as early as 1603, at the initiative of Primate Stanisław Karnkowski, a new Polish translation of the *Catechismus Romanus* appeared, in which the question and answer format was reinstated.²⁰

Hieronim Powodowski (1543–1613), one of the most eminent Catholic polemists in sixteenth-century Poland, also served for a long time as the arch-priest of St. Mary's Church in Cracow, the main parish in the city where he was active as minister. Like Białobrzeski, he directed much of his teaching against the anti-Trinitarian heresy.²¹ His *Catechizm Kościoła powszechnego: nauki do zbawienia potrzebniejsze z dowodów Pisma świętego snadną a dokładną krotkością zamykający* was first published in Poznań in 1577, at the publishing house of Melchior Neringk, with subsequent, slightly altered

17 Kuźmina, *Katechizmy w Rzeczypospolitej* 40–43.

18 *Katechizm, albo nauka wiary y pobożności Krześcijańskiej, według uchwały S. Tridentskiego Concilium* (Cracow, Mikołaj Scharffenberg: 1568); Wyczawski H.E., "Kuczborski Walenty", in *Słownik polskich teologów katolickich* II 462–463; and Kalinowska J., "Kuczborski, Corsbocius, Cusborius Walenty", in Szostek A. (ed.), *Encyklopedia katolicka* (2004) X 147–148.

19 Graff T., "Płaza Tomasz", in Wilk S. (ed.), *Encyklopedia katolicka* (2011) xv 845.

20 Kuźmina, *Katechizmy w Rzeczypospolitej* 27–31; and Pawlik, *Katechizmy w Rzeczypospolitej* 96; Słowiński, *Katechizmy katolickie* 90–99.

21 Ozorowski E., "Powodowski (Powodovius, z Powodowa) Hieronim", in *Słownik polskich teologów katolickich* III, 430–432; and Skrzyniarz R., "Powodowski Hieronim", in Wilk S. (ed.), *Encyklopedia katolicka* (2012) xvi 141–142.

editions published in 1579 and 1596.²² The author emphasises that he wrote the catechism to meet the public need for an explanation of the faith based in Scripture. It also responds, as the author notes, to Protestant accusations about the ignorance of most Catholics in matters of doctrine. The question and answer format makes reading easier, as does the organization of the material into three parts. The first part of the catechism is about faith and hope, the second focuses on Christian love, and the third part concerns matters in contravention of Christian charity. The handbook thus aims to expound the theological virtues. As Christian love is manifest as the fulfilment of the Law, the commentary on the Ten Commandments appears in part two, next to sections dealing with the Commandments as interpreted by the Church and alongside the works of mercy and monastic vows. Powodowski's commentary is reduced to a concise enumeration of practices at odds with the Decalogue.

Man's Duty to Venerate God

The most complete exposition of obligations and duties based on the Commandments appears in Herbest's catechism, as well as in the *Roman Catechism*.²³ For Herbest, the Commandments are a mirror—a mirror for the evaluation of human conduct. As God once led the Israelites out of captivity in Egypt, He now offers the Commandments 'to the spiritual Israel', giving them the means to liberate themselves from the captivity of sin and the devil. The same claim is made in the *Catechism or the Teaching of Faith and Christian Piety*.²⁴ Kuczborski adds that the faithful should ask God for the gift of grace, which will enable them to understand the Decalogue better. Herbest opens the section on the Ten Commandments with an explanation of the relationship between God and man, which he compares to the relationship between a Lord and his dependent servant: 'Sługa wiedzący wolą Pana swego, a nieczyniący jej, będzie srodze karan'.²⁵ God loves whoever fulfils his will, 'jako prawy mąż żonę

22 Kuźmina, *Katechizmy w Rzeczypospolitej* 43–46. Słowiński, *Katechizmy katolickie* 130–133 lists two editions of 1577 and a 1581 edition.

23 Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fols. 292r–318r; irregularly numbered folios throughout the volume.

24 Kuczborski, *Katechizm, albo nauka wiary* 270.

25 'A servant knowing the will of his Lord and not realising it, will be gravely punished'; Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. 291v.

swą miłujący'.²⁶ God is a severe but just judge (*Ex* 20:5–6), as 'men of virtue' can attest. The misfortunes that God occasionally inflicts on the just are not the result of divine injustice, but rather serve to admonish them not to live in sin. At the same time, the authors of the *Roman Catechism* strongly emphasise God's love for man, which they compare to that most perfect form of mutual love—the matrimonial love between a husband and his wife.²⁷ They draw attention to the fact that, in explaining the first commandment, the priest must take into consideration the catechumen's limited imagination; he is unable to properly assess the threat posed by the wrath of God. Therefore, instead of arousing fear among his flock by presenting the Lord as a vengeful God, the priest should strengthen its belief in the love and justice of the Almighty. He should also admonish his people that no bad deed will go unpunished; the soul '[...] zepsowana fałszywymi naukami i złymi chciwościami precz odrzucona od małżeństwa Bożego, jako żona cudzołożna oddalona bywa'.²⁸ This approach reconciles the two perspectives of late medieval spirituality: one focusing on mercy and conveying an awareness of human weakness, the other focusing on the punishing justice of a righteous God (*Ezekiel* 18).²⁹

The first commandment is an opportunity to explain the widely debated Catholic practice of paying homage to God and the saints through their images. All of the authors repeat the canonical Catholic arguments, simultaneously rejecting Protestant accusations of idolatry. They invoke examples from the Old Testament and the unbroken tradition of the universal Church to legitimize the veneration of images.³⁰ Herbest explains that in kneeling before an image,

26 'as a true husband loving his wife'; *ibidem* fol. 296v.

27 Cf. Brooke C.N.L., *The Medieval Idea of Marriage* (Oxford: 1989); and d'Avray D., *Medieval Marriage. Symbolism and Society* (Oxford: 2004).

28 'depraved by false teachings and reprehensible greed will find itself exiled from God in the way an adulterous wife is cast aside'; Kuczborski, *Katechizm, albo nauka wiary* 280.

29 The theological background and social consequences of these two spiritual models accentuating God's wrath and mercy have been thoroughly discussed by Hamm B., "Between Severity and Mercy. Three Models of Pre-Reformation Urban Reform Preaching: Savonarola – Staupitz – Geiler", in Bast R.J. – Gow A.C (eds.), *Continuity and Change* 321–358.

30 Cf. Eire C.M.N., *War Against the Idols. The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (New York: 1986); and Michalski S., *The Reformation and the Visual Arts. The Protestant Image Question in Western and Eastern Europe* (London – New York: 1993). On the evolution of *vita sanctorum* and the connectedness between this genre, images and sermonizing, see: French K.L., *The People of the Parish. Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Philadelphia Pa: 2001) 194–207.

whoever '[...] sercem wierzy'³¹ that her or his prayers are addressed to the prototype whose likeness the image represents, is praying truly. Powodowski claims that Catholics worship God by way of the saints in their images.³² The authors of the *Roman Catechism* explain, however, that this is not a manifestation of the idolatry which God forbade his people (*Ex* 20:4, 32:4). They also encourage the votary to pay homage to the angels and saints. Such a position is not at odds with the doctrine that Christ is the only true mediator between God and men. After all, God Himself acts supernaturally through the relics of the saints. Moreover, the presentation of their images is based on the authority of the apostolic Church, as well as on the decrees of the synods.³³

According to the authors of the *Roman Catechism*, those who place royalty above divine authority, along with those who '[...] w kacerstwo wpadają',³⁴ oppose the commandment 'You shall have no other gods to set against me'. In summing up the teachings of the first commandment, Herbest warns the faithful against heresy, magic and all forms of superstition. In his more elaborate commentary on the first commandment, Powodowski also concentrates on the condemnation of superstitious magical practices, fortune telling, and making signs of the cross in situations where it is neither appropriate nor sanctioned by the Church. He also condemns paraliturgy, that is, all '[...] ceremonie, które sobie niekiedy sam lud pospolity wymyśla nad naukę kościelną'.³⁵ Although the post-Tridentine synodical decrees of the Polish Church banned all those practices that had no legal authorization, a considerable number of clergymen accepted paraliturgy as integral part of traditional popular piety.³⁶ Here Powodowski seems to have adopted a 'middle of the road' approach: he advises the laity to follow the guidance of '[...] kapłanów roztropnych'.³⁷ This is a conventional position which aligns with the reforms promulgated by the Council of Trent, while still paying respect to the social reality of the day.

31 'believes with his heart'; Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. unnumbered.

32 Powodowski, *Katechizm* 60–61.

33 Kuczborski, *Katechizm, albo nauka wiary* 275–278.

34 'fall into heresy'; *ibidem* 272–274.

35 'ceremonies that ordinary folk sometimes contrive over and above the teachings of the Church'; Powodowski, *Katechizm* 60.

36 See: Bracha, "Pierwsze przykazanie" 126–133; Kowalski W., "Change in Continuity: Post-Tridentine Rural and Township Parish Life in the Cracow Diocese", *Sixteenth Century Journal* 35, 3 (2004) 703–704, 712–713.

37 'sagacious priests'; Powodowski, *Katechizm* 60.

Herbest deals briefly with the second commandment, reducing it to the obligation to praise God '[...] sercem, usty i uczynkiem'.³⁸ For Marcin Białobrzewski this is an opportunity to emphasize that a Christian is obliged to stand up against false teachings.³⁹ Hieronim Powodowski, for his part, warns against perjury as well as making promises to God in haste, and taking His name in vain.⁴⁰ The authors of the *Roman Catechism*, in the translation of Kuczborski, express themselves similarly.⁴¹ They state that invoking the name of God or calling upon the saints in inappropriate situations is sinful, as are swearing and utilizing the authority of the Holy Scriptures '[...] ku rzeczom świeckim i sprośnym'.⁴²

A Christian's Sunday Obligations

The holy day is, first and foremost, Sunday. Referring to the practices of the people of Israel and the traditions of the universal Church, Herbest recommends that other days be treated as holy and, he concludes, '[...] im więcej świat, tym lepiej'.⁴³ For it is difficult, he explains, to suppose that Christians are meant to be worse than Jews, who have organised their own numerous feast days in a manner not opposed to God, despite not having received any clear dictate in this matter. In making this point, Herbest adopts the normative position held by medieval theologians, liturgists, and exegetes, whereby Christians should observe feast days in accordance with God's law, and in order to differentiate themselves from Jews.⁴⁴ He clearly formulates a Christian's obligations and duties during feast days: one should refrain from all labours and perform 'good works', including listening to sermons and attending Mass.⁴⁵ In these respects, Herbest aligns his catechism with the age-old tradition of the Church expressed in synodical and canonical decrees.⁴⁶ Other catechists put

38 'with one's heart, mouth, and deeds'; Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. unnumbered.

39 Białobrzewski, *Katechizm albo wizerunk* fol. 50r.

40 Powodowski, *Katechizm* 62.

41 Kuczborski, *Katechizm, albo nauka wiary* 285–288.

42 'for matters secular and lubricious'; *ibidem* 291.

43 'the more feast days, the better'; Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. 299v. From the fifteenth century through to the seventeenth, the residents of the cities and towns of Poland worked ca. 265–270 days a year; Skierska, *Sabbatha sanctifices* 194.

44 Cf. *ibidem* 237.

45 Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. 315v–316r.

46 Cf. Skierska, *Sabbatha sanctifices* 244–250.

forward the same arguments, though in more measured ways. The Eucharist, as Herbest notes, complies with the Church's views of the place of the laity in relation to the liturgy.⁴⁷

However, there are exceptional situations, as Herbest emphasises, during which Christ himself sanctioned working on a holy day. These exceptions include the provision of essential services to the Church and to congregants, as well as the fulfilment of all other duties that the Church deems essential. As an example he gives the cooking and preparing of meals, a widely accepted practice on holy days within the Polish and universal Church.⁴⁸

The catechist then asks a highly thought provoking question: '[...] czemuż też sługa twój, chrześcijaninie, nie ma z tobą w święto odpocząć? [...] Bawił się w dni powszednie gospodarstwem twoim, przecież też w dzień święty nie ma się bawić sprawami Ojca Niebieskiego dla zbawienia swego?'⁴⁹ This question unequivocally defines the circle of recipients to whom the catechism was primarily addressed. They are, as one may conjecture, the gentry and wealthy urban inhabitants. Herbest stands up for the servants and their right to expect treatment that accords with the dictates of the Lord. However, speaking through the text's lay interlocutor, he then adds: '[...] dziwne dziś usługi mamy, dziwnie swawolną czeladź. Wolą oni na piwo, niżli do Kościoła, na nieszpór iść – ani wspominaj.'⁵⁰ Judges and theologians had generally resolved the conflicting interests of masters and servants with respect to the Church's rules on keeping holy days by applying a maximalist interpretation of the Sabbath day commandment.⁵¹ In the catechetical dialogue, the clerical interlocutor confers the responsibility of ensuring that this commandment is implemented on administrators of country estates: the civic authorities should regulate the opening hours of taverns in such a way that they do not oppose the dictates of

47 The participation of the laity in Sunday Mass is extensively discussed by Skierska, *Obowiązek mszalny* 198–222; cf. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* 132 and passim; Rubin M., *Corpus Christi. The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: 1991) 98–107; and Vauchez A., *The Laity in the Middle Ages. Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices* (Notre Dame – London: 1993).

48 Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. 300r–300v; For more on this, see: Skierska, *Sabbatha sanctifices* 276–277.

49 'Why, Christian, does your servant not rest along with you on a feast day? [...] He made merry with your estate on weekdays, so should he not also celebrate the affairs of the Lord Almighty on a holy day for his own salvation?'; Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fols. 300v–301r.

50 'We have strange servants these days, staff that frolics strangely. They prefer to go for a beer than to Church, let alone vespers'; *ibidem* fol. 301r.

51 Skierska, *Sabbatha sanctifices* 263–275.

liturgy. By comparison, the *Roman Catechism* instructs administrators to support the Church in making sure that this commandment is observed.⁵² Herbest adds that as '[...] na wsiach [...] chłopi karczmy tylko w święta pilnują, nie-nadarmo or niena- darmo ich Pan Bóg złymi pany karze'.⁵³ To the question, 'Cóż lepiej: upić się, czyli robić?',⁵⁴ he unequivocally replies that the lesser evil is to work, although he still considers it a sin to labour on a Sunday or any other holy day. Just as labouring on a feast day constrains man physically, so drunkenness constrains the soul. As a matter of fact, drunkenness was a serious social problem.⁵⁵ According to Powodowski, gambling and drunkenness on holy days were cardinal sins because, instead of imploring God for forgiveness '[...] co przeszłych dni zgrzeszył',⁵⁶ men instead deliberately defied the will of God.

Among those activities forbidden on a holy day, Powodowski also mentions visiting markets. The Church had fought ineffectively for decades against the practice of Sunday trading.⁵⁷ Powodowski also reiterates the ban on convening judicial sessions on feast days, making an exception only for certain unexpected causes, a formulation that corresponds to the articles of the Magdeburg Law.⁵⁸

Herbest argues that work in itself is not bad, condemning only work performed on a feast day. He also considers it '[...] lepiej cały dzień kopać, niżli cały dzień tańcować'.⁵⁹ The priest agrees that dancing must be tolerated in those situations where traditions justify it, and, practically speaking, where it cannot be rooted out. There is no doubt, however, that formerly, when the

52 Kuczborski, *Katechizm, albo nauka wiary* 291.

53 '[...] the peasants only remember to frequent the taverns on feast days; is it not for nothing that the Lord God punishes them with malicious masters?'; Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. 301r.

54 'What is better: to get drunk or to work?'; Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. 301r.

55 For more on this, see: Kowalski, "Change in Continuity" 705–706.

56 'for the sins committed in past days'; Powodowski, *Katechizm* 64.

57 See especially Myśliwski G., *Człowiek średniowiecza wobec czasu i przestrzeni (Mazowsze od XII do poł. XVI wieku)* (Warsaw: 1999) 271–278; and Bartoszewicz A., *Czas w małych miastach. Studium z dziejów kultury umysłowej późnośredniowiecznej Polski* (Warsaw – Pułtusk: 2003) 207–208. For a wider social background and the ethical aspect of economic activity, see: Gurevich A.Ia., "The Merchant", in Le Goff J. (ed.), *Medieval Callings* (Chicago: 1990) 242–283.

58 Powodowski, *Katechizm* 63. Cf. Myśliwski, *Człowiek średniowiecza* 283–300; Bartoszewicz, *Czas w małych miastach* 208. The Magdeburg Law was a constitutional and commercial urban law developed in Magdeburg. It was adopted by the majority of urban corporations in central Europe at the turn of medieval and modern times.

59 'better to spend the whole day digging than the whole day dancing'; Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. 303r.

commandment to keep the Sabbath was more strictly enforced, it was a sin to dance. Dance is a pagan tradition, he explains. 'Wiele rzeczy dozwala, kto żywy, ale nie Pan Bóg. Dozwala urząd miejski domu w mieście nierządneho, ale insze są prawa cesarskie, insze Pana Chrystusowe.'⁶⁰ Herbest accepts traditional Church teachings that forbade dancing on the Lord's Day, a day which, under the best of circumstances, should be reserved exclusively for prayer, rest, and peaceful recreation.⁶¹ In agreeing, reluctantly, to the organisation of banquets, he demands that the feast be short and that its participants remember to be moderate in eating, drinking and conversation.

Herbest explains the circumstances that led to the choice of Sunday rather than Saturday as the day of rest. To preserve Saturday as the Sabbath day would be an affront to Christ, tantamount to enforcing the bygone ritual obligation of circumcision. The people of Israel celebrated the Sabbath in accordance with the will of God, who rested on the seventh day after the creation of the world. God's day of rest is a figure for '[...] tajemnicy odpocznienia w grobie Pana Chrystusowego'.⁶² They also celebrated the Sabbath to commemorate the escape from their bondage in Egypt, which in turn prefigures Christ's victory over death.⁶³ As Christ is the new 'scapegoat', who offers himself in the Mass, the celebration of the Saturday Sabbath perforce had to cease. Thus the Old Testament command to observe the Sabbath obliges Christians to worship on Sunday, which is the 'eighth day', sanctified by Christ's resurrection. Herbest points to Adam as the prefiguration of Christ, through whose death and resurrection the promises of the Old Covenant were fulfilled. Moreover, Sunday not only calls to memory the resurrection; it also proclaims the universal resurrection to come.

Herbest acknowledges that this theological material may be difficult for catechumens to comprehend. He states therefore, in the voice of a spiritual

60 'Many things permitted by living souls are not permitted by the Lord Almighty. The town council allows for a house of ill repute, but the laws of Caesar are one thing, those of the Lord Christ another' (reference to *Matthew 22:21*); Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. 303r-303v. Cf. Tazbir J., "Polski barok wobec średniowiecza. Między wzorcem a naganą", *Analecta. Studia i Materiały do dziejów nauki* 1 (1992) 7–27.

61 For more on the relevant teachings of the Polish medieval Church, see: Konarska-Zimnicka S., *Taniec w Polsce średniowiecznej. Świadectwo źródeł pisanych* (Cracow – Kielce: 2009) 172–181 and passim; Bracha, *Nauczanie kaznodziejskie* 344–349.

62 'the mystery of the Lord Jesus' grave, in which he rested after his death'; Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. 308r.

63 Ibidem fols. 307r-308r. Herbest cites here the authority of St. Augustine and his theory of the sign; cf. Ticcianti S., "The Human Being as Sign in Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana*", *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 55 (2013) 20–32.

teacher: 'Tajemnice królestwa swego nie każdemu Pan Bóg daje wiedzieć'.⁶⁴ In reply, the burgher condemns those laymen who '[...] chcą gmerać w Piśmie świętym lada jak'.⁶⁵ As will be apparent, Herbest complies with the age-old traditions of the Church, affirming the clergy's control over doctrine and its dissemination.⁶⁶ For him, this is an occasion to reinforce the official standpoint of the Church discouraging the laity from studying Scripture individually.⁶⁷ There is no doubt, however, that the intellectual horizons of a large number of clergymen were not much broader than those of their parishioners.

The authors of the *Roman Catechism* claim that the Mosaic command to observe the Sabbath day pertains only to ceremonies and ritual obligations, which are now outmoded under the new dispensation. After all, the customs of the people of Israel were only a '[...] cieniem światłości i prawdy'⁶⁸ of Christ and, together with the advent of his true light, the obligations were abrogated. They also emphasise that the Church celebrates Sunday in accordance with the apostolic tradition of the early Church.⁶⁹

Herbest unequivocally rejects Protestant teachings, in particular those of Martin Luther, which refuse to accept the truth of Christ's living sacrifice in the Mass. Aligning himself with scholastic theologians, he insists that the Mass bodies forth the Lord's Passion.⁷⁰ His reflections on the keeping of Sunday as a holy day demonstrate that the Church's understanding of the Gospel's great and profound mysteries is accurate, based as it is on the teachings of the Fathers.⁷¹

As Jesus is the Paschal Lamb, the Church is no longer under any obligation to venerate Saturday, and this is why for Christians Saturday is only the prefiguration of Lord's resurrection. Herbest extrapolates from this designation of an alternative Sabbath day that it is good to celebrate other feast days as well, not only those days expressly identified as such in the Bible. This is something that the Church has always upheld. Even though the Bible expressly declares Saturday sacrosanct, the change of day adopted by the Church correlates to the

64 'Not to everyone does the Lord God allow access to the mysteries of his kingdom'; Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. 308r.

65 'wish to sloppily rummage through the Holy Scriptures'; *ibidem* fol. 308r.

66 Cf. Le Goff J., "Introduction: Medieval Man", in *Medieval Callings* 10.

67 Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. 314r.

68 'shadow of the light and truth'; Kuczborski, *Katechizm, albo nauka wiary* 294.

69 *Ibidem* 294–295.

70 Cf. Palmer Wandel L., *The Eucharist in the Reformation Incarnation and Liturgy* (Cambridge: 2006) 94–138, and *passim*; Sczaniecki P., *Służba Boża w dawnej Polsce. Studia o Mszy św.*, Series II (Poznań: 1966) 78–112, 127–185.

71 Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. 312v.

mystery of Christ's sacrifice and his prophecies concerning the future salvation of humankind. Herbest makes this claim referring broadly to the tradition of the Apostolic Church. The Church's many feast days have a pedigree going back to the apostles. Additionally, the clergy have created new feast days to pay homage to the many saints who now reign with the Lord Jesus in heaven. The Church commemorates these holy servants of God because the saints are a living blessing to the Church. After all, Christ is its head, and a head without members is an impossibility.⁷² The authors of the *Roman Catechism* also emphasise that construed spiritually, Saturday signifies the burial of the 'starego człowieka' ('old man'), whereas Sunday is when the 'nowy człowiek' ('new man') is reborn in the 'nowe przymierze' ('new covenant'), the rules of which must henceforth be piously observed.⁷³

Herbest's lengthy exposition of ecclesiastical dogma is followed by his further explanation of the duties every Christian must fulfil on holy days. With this aim in mind, he makes a number of introductory recommendations. On the eve of a holy day, one must finish work early and go to bed, in order to rise in a timely fashion for matins, that is, for the first part of the canonical hours, which is observed at dawn. If one is too far from a church to participate in the morning worship, and this was still a common problem at the end of the sixteenth century,⁷⁴ the day should commence with prayer at home. Powodowski enumerates illness, danger and poverty among the circumstances which justify an absence from Sunday Mass.⁷⁵

After morning prayers, one should do one's best to visit a place of worship: interestingly, Herbest does not specifically connect this priority to the local parish church. If a visit to church is impossible, one must try '[...] sercem jednak [...] być w Kościele'.⁷⁶ God should be thanked for all benefits received. The only further suggestion he makes is that one must pray to one's guardian angel. Prayers, including the *Our Father*, should be recited calmly, piously and humbly. While attending Mass, one must reflect on the Lord's Passion, especially since every constituent part of the Mass correlates to some aspect of the Lord's

72 Ibidem fols. 314v-315r.

73 Kuczborski, *Katechizm, albo nauka wiary* 297-298.

74 For more on this, see: Bylina S., *Chryścianizacja wsi Polskiej u schyłku średniowiecza* (Warsaw: 2002) 15-45; and Litak S., *Parafie w Rzeczypospolitej w XVI-XVIII wieku. Struktura, funkcje społeczno-religijne i edukacyjne* (Lublin: 2004) 38-47.

75 Powodowski, *Katechizm* 63.

76 'to be in Church with one's heart'; Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. 316r.

Passion or Resurrection, a point confirmed by theological authority.⁷⁷ Singing is allowed, but only if the words sung are intelligible. A liturgy that is being sung has the power to bring the worshipper into an impassioned conversation with God.

Herbest urges the reader to beseech the Creator for the grace of understanding so that he or she will be able to follow closely the message preached from the pulpit: '[...] słowa Boże tak od kapłana przyjmuj jako od sługi Pańskiego i szafarze tajemnic Jego'.⁷⁸ If participation in the Eucharist is to yield fruit, it must be accompanied by charity. One must scrupulously examine everything one has done over the week, bringing one's conscience to bear. Consequently, the preacher must encourage his flock to make confession. The *Roman Catechism* likewise encourages catechumens to take the sacraments of confession and communion as frequently as possible. This was a novelty in the Polish church because, traditionally, even religious people engaged in the life of their parish attended the Lord's table three times a year at most. Frequent communion of the laity was only propagated in Poland by the Jesuits and not earlier than the 1570s.⁷⁹ In addition, the *Roman Catechism* counsels works of charity, such as helping the poor, visiting the sick, and comforting the distressed.⁸⁰

The exceptional nature of Sunday as a holy day is a topic that all the authors under scrutiny here address. Białobrzeski states that it is the day during which we should make God's acquaintance, '[...] albowiem [...] nie możemy dostąpić zbawienia jedno przez wiarę, a wiara jest ze słuchania' (cf. *Romans* 10:17).⁸¹ But works, such as regular church attendance and charity, are also crucial—a point Białobrzeski makes to distinguish himself from the Lutheran doctrine of *sola*

77 On the Christological meaning of late medieval Mass rites in central Europe, see: Sczaniecki, *Służba Boża* 97–112; and Jurkowlaniec G., *Chrystus umęczony. Ikonografia w Polsce od XIII do XVI wieku* (Warsaw: 2001) 100–109.

78 'take the words of God from the priest as if from the Lord's servant and the bestower of His mysteries'; Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. 316r.

79 On the relevant law and practice of the Polish Church, see especially: Sczaniecki, *Służba Boża* 201; Górski K., *Zarys dziejów duchowości w Polsce* (Cracow: 1986) 52–53; Zalewski Z., "Komunia święta wiernych w Polsce w okresie reformy trydenckiej", *Studia Liturgiczne* 5 (1988) 91–138; and Skierska, *Obowiązek mszalny* 222–239, who adds that sporadic appeals to the laity for more frequent Eucharistic attendance did not result in actual practice. Cf. Lahey S.E., "Late Medieval Eucharistic Theology", in Levy I.C. – Macy G. – van Ausdall K. (eds.), *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Middle Ages* (Leiden – Boston: 2012) 499–540; and Rubin, *Corpus Christi* 70 and passim.

80 Kuczborski, *Katechizm, albo nauka wiary* 300.

81 'for [...] we cannot be saved except by faith, and faith is from listening'; Białobrzeski, *Katechizm albo wizerunk* fol. 51v.

fide. Citing the pious devotion of the Israelites, he advises the Christian to prepare himself for the Sunday Eucharist by fasting, abstaining from drinking wine and every other act of impurity. Białobrzieski approvingly cites bans on sexual congress while preparing for vigils and worship, bans well known throughout the ages within the Polish Church.⁸²

After Mass on Sunday, a pious family may meet for lunch, which should commence with the blessing of the food by the sign of the cross. Moreover, Herbest recommends that one attend afternoon sermons, given that participation in vespers is obligatory. Only '[...] po nieszporze, albo też po komplecie, może się człowiek prosty czym przystojnym bawić'.⁸³ Before going to bed, one must evaluate one's behaviour during the day just past. Such prudent examination is essential if one is to pass to the next day in a morally sound fashion.

Catechetical Indoctrination and Social Realities

According to Białobrzieski, the first commandment demonstrates how one is to worship the divine majesty firstly in thought, secondly in speech, and thirdly in body. The concordant fulfilment of these commandments leads man to a complete adoration of God. By fulfilling all three commandments, one achieves a more perfect worship of the Lord.⁸⁴ Herbest likewise emphasises that God expects that the votary attend to him fully: with thoughts, words, and deeds. God will answer such prayers with the love proclaimed by the first three commandments of the Decalogue.⁸⁵

All texts analysed here relate to the universal laws which God commanded his people to observe in the second and fifth books of Moses, specifically, in *Exodus* 20:2–17 and *Deuteronomy* 5:6–2. All the surveyed authors invoke the authority of the Old Testament in support of their arguments, but they also emphasize that the Old Dispensation is merely a corollary to the New, as established by the sacrifice on the Cross. The change of Sabbath day from Saturday to Sunday is symptomatic of the New Dispensation's priority over the Old. The books of the Old Testament are chiefly cited as prefiguration of the New: Christ

82 Skierska, *Sabbatha* 479.

83 'after vespers, or also compline, can simple folk become involved in honest occupations'; Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. 316r. Cf. French, *The People of the Parish* 175.

84 Białobrzieski, *Katechizm albo wizerunk* fols. 50v–51r.

85 Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijanina* fol. unnumbered [298'r] and *passim*.

is the new Adam and Christians are the new chosen people.⁸⁶ The fact that catechists and preachers tended to repeat what their predecessors had taught results from the universally binding nature of moral and legal norms. Unlike most medieval sermons, the texts analysed here are relatively devoid of *exempla*; when examples are invoked they take the form of references to the Old Testament.⁸⁷ Only in Benedykt Herbest's work do we find references to actual social problems, which makes his work the most readable catechism of the day. Moreover, this was the only catechistic manual deliberately intended for universal and individual perusal of the laity.

All of the authors agree that in fulfilling the laws of God it is imperative that one yield to the clergy's reading of those laws. The faithful should subordinate themselves to the rhythm of life set within their parish, as well as to the judgments of their spiritual leaders. This is a pastoral message which the Church of the day inherited from centuries past, and the same holds true of the emphatic admonitions to listen carefully to the preacher's words and to consider them closely.⁸⁸ At the same time, however, Herbest and Kuczborski emphasize something new to the sixteenth century: one must be fully aware of the nature of one's participation in the Mass, and one must take the sacrament of penance and the Eucharist more than once a year. In addition, the authors of the *Roman Catechism* strongly emphasize the congregational nature of the liturgy, and Herbest argues that the fulfilment of religious obligations is not just an individual responsibility but also a social one. The conspicuous attention paid to the problem of 'heresy' is yet another symptom of the contemporaneity of these otherwise very conventional catechisms.

There can be no doubt that the (intended) recipients of the catechisms were first and foremost parish priests, as the *Roman Catechism* makes very clear. However, it was a long way from the argumentation expressed in the catechisms to the practical teaching of the doctrines of the faith. Sixteenth-century synodical statutes, chapter meeting protocols and visitation records of the Gniezno church province, which the Cracow diocese was part of, leave no doubt that the intellectual level of the diocesan clergy of this period left a lot to be desired. Parish priests were often equipped with nothing more than a rudimentary grasp of religious doctrine and they represented the intellectual

86 Cf. Maciuszko J.T., *Symbole w religijności polskiej doby baroku i kontrreformacji* (Warsaw: 1986).

87 Cf. Bracha, *Nauczanie kaznodziejskie* 129–132.

88 Ibidem 116–117. Putting these instructions into practice will not have been an easy task; cf. Dixon C. Scott, *The Reformation and Rural Society: the Parishes of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Kulmbach, 1528–1603* (Cambridge: 1996) 161–162.

level of the rural communities and towns in which they were born. The question that remains unanswered is how they actually used these catechisms. Were they capable of apprehending the scriptural citations and difficult theological problems and did they integrate them into their Sunday teaching before and during the Mass? In preaching the word to their congregants, was the atmosphere they created convergent with the intentions of the catechisms' authors?⁸⁹ Having in mind the parish clergy's generally limited knowledge of the rudiments of the faith, their low moral standards and their limited conception of the nature of their vocation, one may conjecture that, at the turn of the seventeenth century, their comprehension of the *Roman Catechism* (even in Kuczborski's accessible translation) would have posed a real challenge. The concise religious compendia by Białobrzeski and Powodowski could have served the clergy well as handbooks to be used for preparing lay parishioners for Easter confession. However, Benedykt Herbst proves distinctive in having written his catechism not only for the clergy, but also for lay recipients. This is borne out by the communicative language he uses, as well as the moral examples he provides, relevant to everyday realities.

The catechisms discussed here were most likely housed in parish libraries and private book collections belonging to the clergy. From diocesan visitation protocols and parish vital registers, only preserved in large, representative numbers from the turn of the seventeenth century onward, is it known that godparents and prospective spouses were examined to determine whether they had an adequate command of the principles of the faith. The Decalogue was recited and explained to pupils at parish schools, but to what degree is unclear. Religious brotherhoods also possessed 'księgi do nauki wiary',⁹⁰ but we do not know whether they used them with any frequency and, if so, to what ends.⁹¹ In the 1590s, the administrator of the Cracow diocese, the eminent reformer Cardinal Jerzy Radziwiłł, ordered those rectors subordinated to him to keep an obligatory copy of the *Roman Catechism* at hand; in addition, they could select other pastoral manuals at their own discretion.⁹² Inventories of book collections and manuscript homilies may in the future yield more information about the benefits these catechisms conferred on their users.

89 Cf. Bracha, *Nauczanie kaznodziejskie* 81–136 and Kielbus M., "Struktury emocji. 'Imagines agentes' w kazaniach Peregryna z Opola", in Bracha K. – Dąbrowska A. (eds.), *Kaznodziejstwo średniowieczne – Polska na tle Europy. Teksty, atrybucje, audytorium* (Warsaw: 2014) 98.

90 'books for teaching the faith'; cf. Kowalski, "Change in Continuity" 704–705.

91 Ibidem.

92 Kuśmierczyk R., "Problematyka listu pasterskiego kard. Jerzego Radziwiłła z roku 1593", *Nasza Przyszłość* 100 (2003) 236.

Theoretically, the catechisms analysed here should have served as useful tools for explaining difficult theological expositions of the relations between God and man. On a larger scale this was not possible, however, due to the weak clerical discipline. Its strengthening was a long process, with the first positive changes to be seen not earlier than in the 1620s. The limited number of editions made successful implementation of sixteenth-century catechistic manuals even more problematic.

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